

Masterpiece Library of Best Poems

*Poems of
Alfred Lord Tennyson*

TENNYSON'S POEMS



ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

1809—1892

Poems of
**ALFRED LORD
TENNYSON**

*Selected, with a Biographical Introduction
and Notes, by his grandson*

CHARLES TENNYSON



**COLLINS
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**TO
GEOFFREY PETO**

REMEMBERING ALSO PAULINE
*with affection and gratitude for a
friendship of more than sixty years*

Tennyson is a great poet, for reasons that are perfectly clear. He has three qualities which are seldom found together except in the greatest poets: abundance, variety, and complete competence.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTE: The sentences above are printed by kind permission of Mr. T. S. Eliot, O.M. and Messrs. Faber and Faber, Publishers, 24 Russell Square, London W.C.1.

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INTRODUCTION

ALFRED TENNYSON was born on 6th August, 1809, the third son of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, Rector of the two small adjoining parishes of Somersby and Bag Enderby in a remote valley of central Lincolnshire. He was born into an England which had a population of only twelve million and was still essentially agricultural—into a horse-drawn England in which the roads were not yet macadamized, the railway was still unknown and the Industrial Revolution had hardly begun to make itself felt. Europe was still in the throes of the Napoleonic war. France dominated the Continent, and Wellington had only just begun his Peninsular campaign. Politically Britain was a country of Rotten Boroughs, ruled by an aristocratic oligarchy under a monarchy which still retained considerable power. The British Empire was only in embryo, our most important colonies being in the slave-owning West Indies and our possessions in Canada, Africa, Australia and India merely footholds. The Church of England stood unchallenged. Roman Catholics and Dissenters were subject to severe political disabilities, and the literal truth of the Scriptures—whether in the Old or New Testament—had as yet hardly been questioned. In literature, Byron was only just beginning his career, neither Shelley nor Keats had published a line, and the revolutionary work of Wordsworth and Coleridge had, as yet, made little impression on public taste. Moreover, although Scott's poems had helped to lay the foundations of the Romantic movement, his epoch-making novels had not begun to appear.

When Tennyson died in 1892, the British Empire had almost reached its fullest development, including approximately half of the habitable globe. Britain had become an industrial country, covered by a network of railways, served by the penny post and electric telegraph, and with a parliamentary democracy of over five million voters out of a population of about thirty million. Not only was religious liberty firmly established, but religion itself was staggering under the impact of rationalism and scientific materialism.

During these eighty-three years the world had passed through an unprecedented material and intellectual development and Britain had known the greatest epoch of her existence.

For almost half of this amazing period the child, who had been born in 1809 in the little white Lincolnshire Rectory,

had been the principal figure in Anglo-Saxon literature, a close friend of Queen Victoria and of many of the great political, scientific and literary leaders of the time. When he died in 1892, he held a position which no other British poet has ever held during his lifetime.

The first half of his career held little promise of the fame which he was to achieve. His childhood was overshadowed by distressing family circumstances, which left an indelible mark on his character and mental health. Indeed, the atmosphere at the Rectory was at times no less tragic than that at Haworth, where the Brontë sisters were to pass through their tortured childhood a few years later.

The Rector, Dr. George Clayton Tennyson, was a man of fine physique, powerful intellect and varied interests, whose striking conversation and often very unclerical geniality masked an instability of temperament which was destined to cause much misery to his gentle, pietistic wife and large family of children. Very early in his life Dr. Tennyson, as he was generally called, had fallen out with his father, George Clayton Tennyson the elder, a masterful lawyer who, having made a fortune by the practice of his profession and judicious investments in land, had settled at Bayons Manor, near Tealby, in North Lincolnshire, and set about establishing the Tennysons as a county family. Old Mr. Tennyson, for all his hard materialism and business acumen, had a latent vein of romanticism. He was proud not only of his own abilities and success, but also of the pedigree which he claimed through his mother, Elizabeth Clayton, who was heiress of an estate which included a large part of Grimsby, and traced her descent back to Edward III, through a line which included Barons d'Eyncourt of two separate creations. He soon came to the conclusion that his elder son was not fitted to lead the family as squire of Bayons and decided that this honour should be reserved for his second son Charles, for whom he developed an almost morbid devotion. Moreover, he decided that the son whom he considered unworthy to be squire of Bayons should go into the Church. This decision young George Tennyson resented bitterly. He felt no vocation for the Church, and considered himself admirably suited to succeed his father as head of a county family. However, reluctantly and resentfully, he accepted the position assigned to him. Old Mr. Tennyson, anxious to make what provision he could for the son whom he must have realized he was not treating altogether fairly, procured him—in accordance with the shameless pluralism of the time—three livings. These were Somersby and Baz Enderby (adjacent hamlets with a total population of less than one hundred), Benniworth, twelve miles to the north-west, and (in 1813) Grimsby. In 1806 young George married

Elizabeth Fytche, niece of a former Bishop of Lincoln, and one of the beauties of the county, and, in 1808, he settled down at Somersby to look after his handful of rustic parishioners and conduct the weekly services in the tiny, dark and crumbling churches of the two adjoining hamlets. His family grew rapidly. By 1819 there were eleven children, seven boys and four girls, and, in spite of additions made to the house from time to time, including a curious Gothic dining-hall built by the Rector and his coachman with their own hands, life at the Rectory could be exceedingly trying. Indeed, the Doctor, in 1818, wrote that (no doubt including servants and governess) there were twenty-five in the house and five or six sleeping in one room!

These conditions, coupled with his father's antagonism and the contrast between his own position and that of his brother, prayed upon Doctor Tennyson's mind, accentuating a natural morbidity of temperament. As the years went by, he became more and more morose, moody and violent, and the strain upon his nerves was increased by his determination to undertake the chief responsibility for his children's education. By this he hoped to secure for himself a vicarious triumph, which might in some degree compensate his failure to make the best of his own abilities.

There seemed every chance that his hopes would be realized, for his first three children, Frederick, Charles and Alfred, were unusually brilliant. Except for some help in mathematics from a village schoolmaster and an interval of three or four miserable years spent at the Grammar School at Louth, they were entirely taught by their father, who was a hard taskmaster, for he made Alfred learn all Horace's odes by heart before he went to the Louth school at the age of seven. In addition, the boys had the run of his excellent library of English, French, Italian, Greek and Latin classics. Fortunately the children did not react against his strenuous discipline, and his love of literature was a great stimulus to them. Indeed reading, writing and play-acting became the principal occupation of the whole tribe, both boys and girls. In all of this Alfred took the lead, and it is clear from a series of note-books written by him in his eleventh or twelfth year and labelled *The Poetry of Tennyson*, *The Lyrical Poetry of Tennyson*, and so on, that even at that early age he was beginning to think of himself as an established poet with a row of volumes to his credit. At the same age he wrote an epic of several thousand lines in the manner of Scott ("Although the performance was very likely worth nothing," he said many years afterwards, "I never felt more truly inspired") and could compose freely in the heroic couplet, as well as in the usual range of Greek and Latin metres. In his fourteenth year he wrote a mystical blank verse poem,

Armageddon (see *Unpublished Early Poems of Alfred Tennyson*, Macmillan & Co., 1931), strongly imitative of Milton but with much spontaneous imagination and descriptive power, and at about the same time completed at least two blank verse plays, of which *The Devil and the Lady* (first published by Macmillan & Co., in 1930) is now famous (see page 57). This is a remarkable production, showing not only an intimate knowledge of the Elizabethan drama, but a control of metre and language, and a range of knowledge and philosophic thought, astonishing in a boy so young and brought up in such seclusion. The story of the play is a strange one for the child of a nineteenth-century rectory. It tells of an aged magician who, having to leave home on some mystic errand, calls up the Devil and entrusts him with the care of his young wife, and of the shifts to which the Devil is put to keep the lady away from her lovers. Obviously the subject is one for comedy, and it is carried out with high-spirited ease, but with passages which show that many of the ideas and convictions which form the basis of Tennyson's mature philosophy, were already germinating, and that the 'deep mind of dauntless infancy' was already beginning to be troubled with painful doubts and self-questionings.

Although the effect of young Alfred's wide reading is very clear in these early writings, they give little evidence of another influence which was to prove of the highest importance to his poetic development—his love of the Lincolnshire countryside. The neighbourhood of Somersby is remarkably varied in its appeal. The Wolds, a range of hills running up to about five hundred feet in height, with long sweeping curves and well-wooded valleys, drive right through it north and south; and on the east of this, between the hills and the sea, is the marsh, a wide strip of reclaimed pasture divided by dykes filled with feathery reeds and bordered by pollard willows. To the south lies the Fen, a huge area of reclaimed and cultivated land stretching away to the Wash. Somersby itself lies in a beautifully timbered valley on the western side of the Wold, from the top of which there are wonderful views—sky, sea and plain to the east and south, and westward to Lincoln town, with its high-set cathedral, and Lincoln Heath. Doctor Tennyson and his wife, absorbed in their own troubles and the cares of the parish, seem to have exercised little control over the leisure hours of their children, and Alfred, generally in company with his favourite brother Charles, roamed the countryside at will. Together they fished in the brooks, sprung the gamekeepers' traps, made friends with farmers, labourers and longshoremens and absorbed, with a passionate sensibility, the ever-varying pageantry of land, sea and sky.

All Dr. Tennyson's children were abnormally sensitive and

abnormally imaginative, and the life which they led developed these qualities intensively and, for some of them, disastrously. They grew up tall, handsome, and (excepting Frederick) of a gipsy darkness, but shy, farouche, untidy, avoiding general society and pursuing, within their small circle, an intense and isolated life of the imagination.

Unhappily, as Alfred entered the perilous period of adolescence, his father's condition began to deteriorate seriously. Before long he took the most disastrous step that he could have taken; he began attempting to drown his sorrows in drink. Conditions at the Rectory grew more and more distressing and Alfred found himself torn between two conflicting loyalties. For, although his devotion to his mother was one of the strongest influences of his life and he suffered intensely at her suffering, he had a sincere affection and respect for his father, which no ill-conduct could entirely destroy. Often, after a day of violence and misery, he would run out across the dark lane which separates the Rectory from Somersby Churchyard and throw himself down among the gravestones, longing for death.

It was inevitable that such conditions should have a severe effect on a boy of his abnormal sensibility and shyness, making him shrink more than ever from general society, in morbid apprehension of what others might know and think about life at the Rectory, and burdening his mind with a sense of guilt which his mother's pietism was likely to intensify and which, as he grew older, was further aggravated by his growing inability to accept the assumptions on which her simple faith was founded. All this, however, could not check his creative faculty, and he joined with Frederick and Charles in a composite volume of verse (*Poems by Two Brothers*) which was issued by Messrs. Jackson of Louth in 1826, the largest share of the poems being contributed by Alfred. These were mostly conventional exercises in the style of Byron, Campbell, Scott and Moore, and gave little idea of the severe strain which he was undergoing, or of the originality and power which had marked *The Devil and the Lady* and *Armageddon*. These and other poems more characteristic and expressive of his state of mind, he kept back, feeling that they would be too unconventional for Messrs. Jackson's public.

By the summer of 1827 it became evident that something must be done to get Charles and Alfred away from home. Frederick, who was to inherit the Grimsby property, had already been a year at Cambridge after a brilliant but erratic career at Eton. In the autumn the two boys followed him to Trinity.

So far as I can ascertain, Alfred had never before been more than twenty miles from the Rectory, except when, in 1825, he went with his father and Frederick to enter the latter at Cam-

bridge. In spite of all the misery which he had endured at Somersby, he felt leaving home acutely and his morbid shyness, aggravated by his extreme short-sight, made him shrink, at first, from the exuberant undergraduate life of the University. But his striking personality and the rumour of his poetic gifts soon began to have their effect. He was already known as one of the three brothers who had had a volume of their poems published while they were still schoolboys; as brother of Frederick, the brilliant and turbulent Etonian, who had carried off the University Prize for a Greek ode, and wrote verse as fluent and almost as musical as Shelley's; as victim of a family feud about which Frederick had no doubt spoken freely and with feeling. His appearance added greatly to the interest which such reports had created. He was tall, dark and very powerfully built, with a magnificent head crowned by a tangle of black hair. His personal untidiness and extraordinary naïvety soon became a byword and there was an air of burly rusticity about him which had earned him the nickname of "the Ploughman" among his cousins at Bayons. Those who got through this rough outer shell discovered a remarkable contrast. To them he disclosed a wide and unconventional range of knowledge in many fields, a strong and most masculine sense of humour and a rich imagination combined with a gift of sledge-hammer common sense. In conversation he seemed to pierce instinctively to the heart of every question, always to find the exactly right word and never to use a word too many. It was not surprising that before long he found himself a member of a group of friends which included some of the most intelligent young men at a college which has always been renowned for the breadth of its interests and its love of argument.

The effect upon him was bewildering, for this was a crucial moment in the revolutionary period which had set in after the Napoleonic war. Scientific invention and research were opening new vistas of knowledge and social progress; old barriers were breaking down; new ideas and ideals were storming the ancient strongholds of religion and politics. At times he seemed to himself to have stepped suddenly out of the twilight of the past into the glare and bustle of a tumultuous present; to see the

daybeam sport

New risen over Albion:

to be filled with a new exultation and an intense desire to

pile fresh life on life and dull

The sharp desire of knowledge still with knowing.

Then the tension would relax and the old misery and heart-ache flood back upon him, for there was no improvement in the atmosphere at Somersby, which, at the end of the year.

actually suffered a sudden and tragic deterioration. In December Frederick was sent down from Cambridge for general insubordination and insolence to the college authorities. His presence at the Rectory during the next few months led to repeated conflicts with his father and deplorable scenes of violence, during one of which the Rector seized a loaded gun and threatened the life of his son and others who attempted to intervene. Early in the new year, gentle Mrs. Tennyson made up her mind that she could no longer remain at the Rectory with her husband. She left to stay with her sister at Louth, and Dr. Tennyson was packed off for a Continental tour which it was hoped might help to divert and calm his mind. It was fortunate for Alfred that this spring saw firmly established the great friendship of his life—with Arthur Hallam.

Arthur, son of Henry Hallam, the great Whig historian, came to Trinity in the autumn of 1829, after a brilliant career at Eton, where he had been considered the best poet and orator and was one of the most popular boys in the school. On leaving Eton he had spent several months in Italy, where he developed a great enthusiasm for the poems of Dante, visited the graves of Keats and Shelley and learned to see in their writings (which were still anathema to English critics) a new hope for the development of English poetry. Unfortunately, he also fell deeply in love with an English girl somewhat older than himself and, on returning to England, had to leave her without any hope that his love might be reciprocated. This parting, and his separation from his school friends—among them W. E. Gladstone, who had gone from Eton to Oxford—made him hungry for sympathy and affection on entering the strange atmosphere of the University. Alfred's need, born of his shy and sensitive temperament and the distressful circumstances of his home life, was equally great. It was a happy chance which brought the two together at Trinity. For Alfred, at least, the benefit was incalculable.

It is difficult for the modern reader to form any adequate idea of the ability and charm which made so many of the leading men of his generation, including Gladstone, look back on Arthur Hallam as the finest and most gifted spirit of their time. His writings have intelligence, sincerity, liveliness and charm, but do not convince one that he would have reached the highest rank as poet or philosopher. He had, however, an extraordinary capacity for assimilating ideas, great facility of expression and a personality in which unselfishness, idealism, energy and mercurial charm were delightfully blended. Such a combination of qualities was peculiarly appealing to Tennyson, who suffered acutely during the months immediately following Frederick's rustication and the temporary separation of his parents. The thought of all this unhappiness would cause the depression

which had haunted him since adolescence, to descend like a storm-cloud, awakening all his old conviction of sinfulness and the agonizing realization that he was drifting away from the religion which meant so much to his beloved mother, and without which it was so difficult to endure the bitter distress at the Rectory, and to find any meaning and purpose in human existence. These moods, acting on his nervous temperament, often seriously affected his bodily health or made him think that it was seriously affected. Hallam's more elastic spirit and brilliant mind were of inestimable value in helping him to combat such moods and to mix more easily with the congenial society of the college, and Hallam, on his side, was captivated by the power and charm of Tennyson's personality and its scarcely less appealing weaknesses. By the spring of 1829 the friendship between the two men was firmly established. Before the end of the summer term they had both been elected members of 'The Cambridge Conversazione Society' (colloquially known as 'The Apostles'), a club which had been founded by Frederick Denison Maurice and John Sterling for the free discussion of social, religious and philosophical questions, and included in its membership many of the leaders amongst the undergraduates and younger graduates. But the society was something more coherent than a mere debating club. The members formed a closely knit social group which worked, talked, laughed and played together during term-time, and toured and visited together during vacation. Tennyson soon forfeited his membership by refusing to read an essay according to the rules, but he continued a kind of honorary member, attending the meetings when he liked and living on intimate terms with the members, several of whom remained his life-long friends. With Arthur Hallam his intimacy grew daily richer in affection. Before the end of the year Arthur visited Somersby and fell in love with Alfred's sister Emily.

Alfred, of course, was soon recognized as the Poet of the Apostles, and great was their delight when in the summer of 1829 he carried off the Chancellor's Medal for English Verse with a rather disjointed poem on the unpromising subject of *Timbuctoo*. He does not seem to have taken the competition very seriously, for his *Timbuctoo* was constructed by extracting passages from his old and very inappropriate poem *Armageddon* and connecting these with new and more or less relevant matter. The examiners were so much impressed by it that they gave it the prize, which had never before been awarded for a poem in blank verse.

The Apostles had one characteristic which was not altogether wholesome, a tendency to mutual admiration. Tennyson had already developed the dislike of adverse criticism, which was a

symptom of his morbid sensibility and was destined to cause him much unhappiness in later life. This was well understood by the Apostles, and it became the accepted rule that, when he read his poems aloud, disapprobation must only be expressed by silence. Not that there was often any impulse to disapproval, since, in the eyes of the Apostles, their poet could scarcely do wrong. Moreover, the power and beauty of his reading was such that it was apt to obscure any weakness there might be in what he read. The result was, no doubt, to retard the development of his power of self-criticism, though of course his fertility and self-confidence were correspondingly increased.

The effects of this were clearly seen when, in the summer of 1830, he issued, through Effingham Wilson, of the Royal Exchange, a volume of about one hundred and sixty pages under the title *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. This was a very unequal production. It contained three pieces—*Mariana*, *The Dying Swan*, and *A Spirit Haunts the Year's Last Hours*, which are among the finest of his lyrics, and a most original and moving long poem, the *Supposed Confessions*, in which he gave direct expression to the mental anguish he had endured during the last few years at Somersby. There were several other poems of much more than ordinary ability, but not quite of the first rank. Far too many, however, were not the result of any compelling emotion—conventional love lyrics, rather superficial essays in metaphysics, or metrical experiments with nothing sufficiently substantial about them to justify their publication. The poet would probably have realized these weaknesses had it not been for the excessive encouragement of his friends who, of course, received the volume enthusiastically. The professional critics, with the exception of Leigh Hunt, paid little attention to it.

Soon after the publication of his book, Alfred set off on an adventure, which was to have a powerful effect on him. The Apostles, stout Liberals to a man, were keen supporters of the revolutionary movements then in progress on the Continent, and John Sterling had enlisted their active interest in the attempt of a band of Spanish exiles, under General Torrijos, to land a small armed force in the peninsula and raise Spain against the monarchy. Alfred, who had saluted the Spanish revolutionaries with an enthusiastic ode in *Poems by Two Brothers*, responded readily to Sterling's appeal, and he and Arthur set out in July on a journey through France to carry money and cyphered instructions to the Northern confederates of Torrijos, whom they were to meet in the Pyrenees. The main expedition was a disastrous failure. The leaders, with one of their English associates, were caught and executed and, though Tennyson and Hallam accomplished their task and returned safely to

England, they were bitterly disillusioned by the brutality and self-seeking of the revolutionaries. It is probable that these experiences had considerable influence in turning Tennyson's mind away from revolutionary methods, and this tendency was confirmed when the friends returned to Trinity. The country that autumn was convulsed by the Reform Bill controversy. There was an epidemic of rick-burning in Cambridgeshire and rumours of a revolutionary attack on the town which, however, came to nothing. Alfred remembered vividly all his life the sallies which he and his friends made into the country to help in fighting the fires, and the volunteer force, armed only with clubs, which they formed to repel the threatened attack.

That Christmas Arthur spent at Somersby, where he formally betrothed himself to Emily. Alfred's delight at this was dashed by Henry Hallam's insistence that his son, who was still a year short of his majority and would not for several years be able to earn a living by his proposed profession of the law, should not see or correspond with Emily until after his twenty-first birthday, on 1st February, 1832.

Within a few weeks the situation at Somersby underwent a sudden and tragic change. Dr. Tennyson, whose health and morale had not benefited by his foreign travels, died after a short but agonizing illness. The shock to his family was great, for, in spite of his grievous failings, he had shown real affection for his children, sharing their ambitions and helping them in their creative efforts to the best of his considerable abilities. It soon became evident that his death must add to their difficulties for, although he had been the primary cause of the antagonism between Somersby and Bayons, he had also been some protection to his family, his father's realization of the very substantial grievance under which he suffered making the old gentleman cautious in dealing with them. Now they were delivered, without any defence or support, into the hands of 'the old man of the Wolds', as his grandchildren called him. There was an immediate inquisition into the state of the Somersby finances. The Doctor had left a few hundred pounds of debt; probably less than his father had anticipated. Far more disturbing to him was the discovery that Frederick, Charles and Alfred had between them incurred about eight hundred pounds of debt at Cambridge (Alfred's share being one hundred and seventy pounds) representing no specific extravagance, but the slow accumulation of an adverse balance against young men who had no experience of managing money and found themselves led by circumstances into association with companions richer than themselves.

Alfred was promptly withdrawn from Cambridge without a degree. This deprivation was probably not unwelcome, for

he had paid little attention to the purely linguistic and mathematical studies of the University, devoting himself almost entirely to the society and conversation of his friends and the cultivation of his poetic talent. Much more objectionable was his grandfather's strong pressure that he should go into the Church to secure himself a living. This he managed to resist and, with Arthur Hallam's help, set about finding a market for his poetry. Arthur first laid siege to the young publisher, Edward Moxon, who was himself a poet and interested in the publication of poetry. Moxon, in July, acquired the newly established *Englishman's Magazine*, and in the August issue of this there appeared a highly, indeed excessively, eulogistic article by Hallam *On some Characteristics of Modern Poetry and on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson*. There was talk of Alfred's becoming a regular contributor to the magazine, but before the end of the year Moxon had to cease publication, owing to lack of public support. He was, however, definitely interested in the proposal of a new volume of verse by Alfred. Then, in May of the succeeding year (1832), there appeared in Christopher North's famous commentary *Noctes Ambrosianae* (*Blackwood's Magazine*) a rowdy, blackguardly and patronizing article on *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* which, while giving Tennyson quite a fair share of discriminating praise, derided him as a member of the 'Cockney School' of Keats and Shelley, made cruel fun of his weaknesses and held Arthur Hallam's laudatory article up to savage ridicule. Tennyson felt this attack deeply, both on his own account and that of his friend, for 'Christopher North' (John Wilson) was the most powerful critic of the day, and held back his new book for further revision. Meanwhile, there were fresh grounds for disquiet at Somersby. The mental condition of Alfred's younger brother Edward had for some time been causing the family great anxiety. This autumn he suffered a complete breakdown and had to be removed to an asylum, which he was never to leave. Septimus, also, was miserable and restless at the solicitor's office where he had been sent to work, and there were fears that he might follow the same road. No less grievous was the state of Alfred's favourite brother Charles, who, since leaving Cambridge, had become the victim of some nervous disorder, involving a good deal of neuralgic pain. For this, a doctor had prescribed opium, and before long Charles became a victim of the perilous habit.

It was fortunate that in February, 1832, when Arthur Hallam attained his majority, his father withdrew the ban on communication with Emily, so that he could now visit Somersby freely as her accepted lover. But the prospect of marriage seemed as remote as ever, for old Mr. Tennyson would only make the most meagre settlement on his grand-daughter, and Henry

Hallam, who was prepared to be much more generous, would not agree to the marriage on such terms. All this, however, did not prevent Alfred from going ahead with his projected volume or Arthur from throwing all his energies into the effort to make it a success. The book was published by Moxon in December, 1832, under the title *Poems* by Alfred Tennyson, and showed a great advance on *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. Two years of comradeship with Arthur and his other Cambridge friends had broadened and deepened Alfred's intellectual scope and increased his technical ability, while the journey with Arthur through France and the Pyrenees had opened a whole new range of impressions, the effects of which were visible in some of the finest of the new poems, such as *Cenone*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *Mariana in the South* and *The Palace of Art*. Most important of all was the evidence of a new purpose and a more controlled aim. There was no longer any trace of the morbid introspection of the *Supposed Confessions*. This had been succeeded by a conflict (the result of Alfred's introduction to the stimulating and tumultuous life of Cambridge) between his inclination to withdraw into himself, 'to muse and brood and live in memory' like the Lotos Eaters, and a new longing, like that which drew the Lady of Shalott away from the magic loom and mirror to mix with the everyday life of the world as it streamed along beneath her window. In that strange mystical poem *The Hesperides*, the Golden Apple which the Dragon guards is the symbol of some spiritual treasure which the poet feels must be hidden from the world, 'Hoarded wisdom brings delight' . . . 'All things are not told to all'. *The Palace of Art*, on the other hand, shows the fate of the soul which, in her love of beauty and consciousness of intellectual power, withdraws herself from humanity, only to find in the end that she cannot altogether exclude 'the riddle of the painful earth'. That the conclusion of *The Palace of Art* represented Tennyson's own deliberate view is shown by the presence in the volume of *The May Queen* and *The Miller's Daughter*, two poems in which he strove, for the first time, to depict simple human emotions and to speak directly to the heart of the ordinary man.

One would have thought that a volume containing so many of the poems which are now regarded as among the poet's finest achievements (even though some of these included passages considerably below the standard to which subsequent revision was to bring them), would have met with immediate recognition from any critic of reasonable intelligence. Unfortunately only one critic, the Unitarian minister William Johnson Fox, did show reasonable intelligence, and his paper, *The Monthly*, had a very small circulation. Tennyson had now

been labelled as of the school of Keats and Shelley and that was enough to condemn him. Almost all the reviewers pronounced the new volume inferior to *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, and some violently attacked it, charging the poet with obscurity, wilful archaism and affectation. But the worst and most fatal attack did not appear until April, 1833. Alfred had, very foolishly and against the strong advice of Arthur Hallam, included in his book a rather feebly abusive epigram on John Wilson, referring to Christopher North's article in *Noctes Ambrosianae*. This evidently infuriated Wilson who, there is little doubt, asked John Wilson Croker to attack Tennyson's book in *The Quarterly Review*. Croker, who had been the author of the notorious article on Keats in *Blackwood's* fifteen years before, was delighted to have the chance of belabouring another poet of 'The Cockney School', and did so with a savagery, dishonesty, and malevolence which have seldom been surpassed.

The effect of his article was disastrous, for the *Quarterly* was by far the most influential review of the day. The sale of Alfred's volume was irretrievably injured, and for the next ten years, when the critics mentioned him at all, it was almost always with disparagement or ridicule.

In after years Alfred used to say that Croker's attack, coming as it did on the top of all the troubles at Somersby, almost crushed him. Fortunately he had Arthur to turn to, for the two were together in London when the fatal issue of the *Quarterly* appeared. Mary Tennyson, Alfred's favourite sister, was there too, and her beauty and sweetness of character made a great impression on Henry Hallam who, it seems, had deliberately refrained from making acquaintance with Emily, fearing that this might encourage his son's attachment. The Hallams now definitely accepted Arthur's engagement and there was talk of fixing a date for the marriage.

Arthur was often at Somersby during the summer, and Alfred, in reaction from his distresses of the winter and spring, enjoyed a burst of spiritual exaltation which showed itself in the composition of *The Gardener's Daughter*. Years afterwards he told Robert Browning that when writing this idyll he felt his life to be in flower and made 'baskets full' of similar poems, emanations of the same spirit.

Then, in September, came the overwhelming sorrow of his life. On the afternoon of the fifteenth, Henry Hallam, who was visiting Vienna with Arthur, found him lying dead of a sudden seizure in his chair at their hotel.

The blow was crushing. His friendship with Arthur had meant everything to Alfred during four distressful and bewildering years, giving him confidence in his abilities and helping him to rise above sorrows and disappointments which might

otherwise have overwhelmed him. Now all this was suddenly torn away. A lifelong prospect, founded on his own friendship and Emily's hoped-for union with his friend, was blotted out instantly and forever. Waves of depression swept over him, so dark that he often longed for death. Could it be that Arthur, with his infinite capacity for affection and brilliant promise, was gone for ever? If this great spiritual treasure could be thus suddenly annihilated, if all human love and all man's spiritual effort are but momentary ripples on the ocean of eternity, what value could there be in life? What was left but to curse God and die?

As the weeks passed he began slowly to regain control of his powers. The desire to help his mother and Emily were strengthening influences. He began to write again and by the end of the year had already completed or sketched out *The Two Voices* (originally called *Thoughts of a Suicide*), *Ulysses*, *St. Simeon Stylites*, *St. Agnes*, *Lancelot and Guinevere* and *Sir Galahad*. He had also begun work on the *Morte d'Arthur* and composed some of the most poignant sections of *In Memoriam*.

But, although he continued to write, his great sorrow drove him back into himself, and the next four years were spent in almost unbroken seclusion at Somersby, for the family continued to live on at the Rectory, which was not required by the new incumbent. The care of the household now devolved almost entirely on Alfred, for Frederick left England in July, 1834, for the Mediterranean, where he was to make his home for the next thirty years, and their mother was little fitted for practical business. Though nothing could induce him to consider further publication (for he could not face the torrent of ridicule and misrepresentation which the occasional references to his work in the Press showed him he might expect) he worked hard at the revision of his old poems and the composition of new ones. He also read steadily to increase his capacity for grappling with the great philosophic and religious questions concerning the survival of the human spirit, the freedom of the human will and the existence of a divine purpose guiding the Universe, which, after Hallam's death, more and more absorbed his thoughts. His grandfather, having become fearful of disestablishment, had ceased to press him to take orders, but the family now had nothing to live on except what the old man allowed them. Now and then a present from his favourite aunt allowed Alfred to meet his friends in London, but when, in 1835, he received an invitation to visit his Trinity friend, James Spedding, in Cumberland, and meet Edward FitzGerald, he had to sell his Cambridge Gold Medal to make the visit possible. A most fortunate visit it was, for FitzGerald, himself a man of genius who was to add a classic to English literature,

became one of the poet's most faithful and best-loved friends. When the visit was over, this new friend summed up his impressions thus:

"I will say no more of him than that the more I see of him the more cause I have to think him great. His little humours and grumpinesses were so droll that I was always laughing. I must however say that I felt what Charles Lamb describes, a sense of depression at times from the overshadowing of a so much more lofty intellect than my own. . . . I could not be mistaken in the universality of his mind."

A few weeks after Alfred came back from the Lakes his grandfather died, grasping the hand of his favourite son. The contents of his will confirmed the antagonism which had so long divided the two branches of the family. A small annuity was left to Elizabeth Tennyson, and for each of her children there was a provision of about three thousand pounds. At the same time, arrangements were made to secure from the three eldest sons and their mother, for the benefit of the residuary estate, the few hundreds which their grandfather had paid up for their debts. Bayons, together with the great bulk of the old gentleman's landed property and his residuary estate, was left to his second son, who immediately took the name of d'Eyncourt and set about converting the pleasant little manor house at Bayons into a Gothic castle, with moat, portcullis, banqueting-hall, a fine machicolated curtain wall to screen the domestic offices, and a ruined Norman keep on the rising ground at the back.

The rupture between Bayons and Somersby was now complete and Alfred began to feel the desire for a final break with the past. He had few friends in the neighbourhood ('a land of sheep and squires' he called it) and there is some evidence that this period of his life was further disturbed by an attachment to the stepdaughter of a wealthy neighbour, which her guardians discouraged. Whatever the importance of this attraction may have been, it was soon eclipsed by one which was to prove the happiest and most potent influence in his later life. In 1836 Charles, who had thrown off the opium habit, taken the name of Turner under the will of an uncle and become Vicar of Grasby, at the northern end of the Wolds, was married to Louisa Sellwood, daughter of Henry Sellwood, a solicitor practising in Horncastle. Louisa's sister Emily was bridesmaid and Alfred best man. Before long Alfred had become engaged to Emily, although there seemed little prospect of an income which would make marriage possible.

The following year enforced a decision to leave Somersby,

for the owner of the Rectory decided to occupy the house himself. The move was not unwelcome, though Alfred felt deeply the severance from the place which had been his home for twenty-eight years; how deeply one can judge from sections 100-103 of *In Memoriam*. The family decided to go south and took High Beech House at Beech Hill near Epping. The proximity of the forest and the opportunities which the new home gave for seeing his friends in London, helped to make it tolerable to Alfred, although he found suburban society ponderous and cold-hearted, and knew that no other countryside could ever mean so much to him as the high wolds, the dike-trenched fenland, the long-ridged dunes and magnificent seas of his native Lincolnshire. Worst of all, the move had carried him far away from Emily Sellwood.

On the whole, however, the change was for the better. Meetings in London with old friends like Spedding, FitzGerald, Thackeray and Monckton Milnes, led to the making of new ones, of whom the most important were Carlyle, Gladstone, John Forster and Samuel Rogers, then the most influential man in the literary society of London. It was not long before Alfred came to have a real affection for the central roar of the great City, particularly Fleet Street and the Strand, with their surrounding by-ways. These new influences drew him out of himself and gave him fresh and stimulating interests, and the recognition by the Sellwoods of his engagement to Emily (in 1838) brought a new serenity. The move to Epping can be regarded, therefore, as having closed the period of isolation and depression which followed Arthur's death.

But he was not to enjoy this new-found happiness for long. Soon after the family's establishment at High Beech, Charles Turner's home had to be broken up. The excitement of his marriage had proved too much for his nerves and he once more had recourse to opium. His wife struggled devotedly to free him from the fatal habit. She succeeded, but the strain was too great. She suffered a severe breakdown and had to be separated from him and placed under medical care. This calamity, added to Alfred's apparent inability to earn an income and his Bohemian habits and unconventional opinions, alienated Mr. Sellwood, who some time in 1840 forbade all further communication between the lovers.

These repeated blows of fate began to affect Tennyson's health very adversely. He had never been careful of himself and his addiction to strong port wine and shag tobacco helped to disorder his nerves. Before long FitzGerald and his other friends became seriously anxious about him.

While in this state of nervous depression, he was offered what seemed a providential chance of making a sum of money

sufficient to justify him in approaching Mr. Sellwood again for consent to his marriage. Near to High Beech House was a lunatic asylum, kept by Dr. Matthew Allen, a friend of the Carlyles. Thomas Carlyle described him as a "hopeful, earnest-frothy" kind of man, but he had considerable ability and his views on the treatment of mental disease were in advance of his time. Tennyson took a good deal of interest in Allen's patients and liked to visit the asylum and talk to them. In this way he became fairly intimate with the proprietor. Unfortunately, Allen was a financier and speculator as well as a mental specialist, and, in 1840, he succeeded in inducing Tennyson to invest the whole of his small capital in a scheme for carving wood by machinery, assuring him that in a very few years his three thousand pounds would be bringing him in that amount annually. Before very long there began to be ominous rumours about the scheme, and Alfred succeeded in preventing his mother and brothers from following his example. His own investment was, however, irretrievable, and for months he was in an intermittent fever of anxiety which further affected his nerves and general health.

Just when his negotiations with Allen were coming to a head, he found himself suddenly confronted with what amounted to a threat from admirers in the U.S.A. to arrange for the republication there of his two volumes of 1830 and 1832. Ever since the breaking off of his engagement to Emily, he had been considering the possibility of issuing a new volume of verse, and this friendly threat from the New World gave him the encouragement which had not been forthcoming from English critics. Early in 1841 he set about preparing for the press two volumes, one containing a revised selection from his earlier poems, and one entirely composed of new work. Both were published in May, 1842, and Tennyson awaited the reaction of the critics with nervous apprehension. He even had a mood of fierce revulsion against the work on which he had lavished such intense care. "Don't abuse my book," he wrote to Fitz-Gerald, "you can't hate it worse than I do, but it does me no good to hear it abused; if it is bad, you and others are to blame who continually urged me to publish." But 'Fitz' did not at all share his fears or feelings. "Alfred," he wrote, "will publish such a volume as has not been published since the time of Keats, and which once published, will never be suffered to die."

The two volumes came out on 14th May at what was, in fact, a most opportune moment. The established poets, Wordsworth, Southey, Moore, Rogers and Campbell, had none of them published anything for some years. No new favourite had arisen to take their place, and, although the 'Cockney School' was still coldly regarded by the older critics, the poems of

Coleridge, Keats and Shelley were slowly gaining favour and helping to prepare the way for its general acceptance.

Tennyson's two volumes, by the variety and richness of their appeal, were well qualified to take advantage of this opportunity. They were, in fact, though neither Tennyson nor his friends anticipated this, to form the turning point of his career. In the first volume were included twenty-four out of the fifty-six poems of the volume of 1830 and sixteen out of the thirty contained in that of 1832. Only one first-rate poem, *The Hesperides* (see page 138) was omitted, and many of the most important poems (c.g., *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *Cenone*, and *The Palace of Art*) had been drastically revised and considerably improved. The second volume covered a remarkable range of subject and treatment. First came the magnificent *Morte d'Arthur*, forerunner of the *Idylls of the King*. The prologue and epilogue of this were examples of an entirely new type of work, of which the volume contained further specimens in *Audley Court* and *Walking to the Mail*—the English idyll, based on the idylls of the Greek Theocritus, cameos of contemporary life, classical in form and language, but realistic in substance. This was a form of poem which Tennyson was to make peculiarly his own. *The Gardener's Daughter*, though idyllic in form, was distinguished by a greater richness of treatment, and *Dora*, with its austere and tragic atmosphere was more akin to one of Wordsworth's blank verse narratives. *Ulysses* treated a classical theme in an entirely new way and was to become the most famous of all Tennyson's experiments in this field. *The Two Voices*, in which a distressed spirit discusses with the still small voice of the tempter, the permissibility of suicide, and *Love and Duty*, which poignantly recalled the misery of the poet's parting from Emily Sellwood, were subjective poems of strong and moving emotion. In the strange and unequal *Locksley Hall*, with its rattling, trochaic rhythm, was sublimated much of the misery which the poet had endured through the family dissensions of Bayons and Somersby, and of the passionate optimism which the scientific discoveries and industrial triumphs of the time were spreading through the England of the thirties and forties.

Then there was a series of brilliant lyrics—*St. Agnes*, *Sir Galahad*, *Sir Launcelot* and *Queen Guinevere*, *The Poet's Song* and the heart-searching *Break, Break*; three charming essays in a lighter vein—*The Talking Oak*, *The Day Dream* (completed and extended from the volume of 1830) and *Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue*; and two pieces of rare imagination and sardonic power (generally overlooked by modern critics), *St. Simeon Stylites* and *The Vision of Sin*.

The immediate reception of the two volumes was tepid.

Eight hundred copies were printed and by September only five hundred had been sold. The reviews were not enthusiastic—not even those by such personal friends as John Forster, Sterling and Richard Monckton Milnes. None, however, was violently hostile and the glowing approval of such men as Carlyle, Dickens and Rogers was a very welcome encouragement.

The first really adequate review was by James Spedding, and this did not appear until April, 1843. By then, Alfred had learned that the wood-carving project had failed irretrievably. The whole of his small capital was lost and his hopes of a reconciliation with the Smallwoods shattered. To a man of normal sensibility this would have been a severe blow; in Alfred it caused a mood of depression so prolonged and severe that his friends became seriously alarmed for him, some even fearing for his life. Fanny Kemble put forward his name for the Laureateship, in succession to Southey, who had died in March, but this had already been offered to and accepted by Wordsworth. Then Sir Robert Peel suggested a single payment from public funds to relieve his immediate necessities, but this Alfred refused. A large part of the winter and spring (1843 and 1844) he spent at a hydropathic establishment, in an effort to recover from 'the perpetual panic and horror of the past two years.' From this treatment he emerged in a more wholesome state of mind and body, and he was further cheered by the generosity of his old Cambridge friend, Edmund Lushington (professor of Latin and afterwards Lord Rector of Glasgow University), now married to his sister Cecilia, who insured Allen's life in his favour. Allen died a few months later and Alfred thus recovered a large part of his loss.

Meanwhile, although the volumes of 1842 had greatly enhanced his reputation, sales had been slow, and only one thousand eight hundred copies had been disposed of in the three years following publication. His friends, fearing that he would never be able to earn a living by his poetry, now made a determined effort to secure him a pension from the Civil List. Great was their joy, when towards the end of 1845, Peel offered a pension of two hundred pounds a year. This Alfred accepted, after considerable hesitation. Although, as he said, he had done nothing himself to solicit the grant, the word pension 'stuck in his throat' and he feared that Peel's action would promote jealous feelings and, possibly, personal attacks. His fears were justified, for, on 12th January, Bulwer Lytton included in *The New Timon*, a poem which he was issuing in instalments, a spiteful attack on Tennyson's poetry and on Peel for granting the pension. Alfred was always abnormally sensitive to criticism of a personal kind. This attack stung him particularly, for in a

note to his poem, Lytton, who was a close friend of his uncle, Charles d'Eyncourt, and a frequent visitor at Bayons, referred with special emphasis to the fact that Alfred was a member of a wealthy family and, therefore, in no need of help from the public purse. In his irritation Alfred dashed off a reply, which he entitled *The New Timon and the Poets*, and dispatched it to John Forster, without any instructions as to its publication. Forster, who was annoyed at Lytton's obstinate denial of his authorship of *The New Timon*, sent the lines to *Punch*, where they duly appeared, completely turning the laugh against Lytton, whose dandyism and affectations they mercilessly satirized (see page 475). A few years before such an episode would have exposed Tennyson to violent counter-attacks from opponents of the 'Cockney School'. Now, no paper of standing ventured to show any approval of Lytton. Here was strong evidence that Tennyson was, at last, beginning to win public support.

He now felt encouraged to begin work on a subject (woman's education and place in national life) which he had often discussed with Emily Sellwood, and had probably been turning over in his mind ever since his Cambridge days. The poem which he had in view would be a complete change from anything he had done before and on a much larger scale. He had been tempted in the thirties and early forties to try his hand at a long work and had thought of attempting an Epic on King Arthur and the Round Table, but had refrained, fearing that he was not yet capable of such a large undertaking. Now, having achieved success in so many fields, he felt more self-confident. As to the subject, he had come to feel that a poem should reflect the hour, and this was one which was just beginning to assume practical significance, although actually three years were to elapse before the foundation of the first Women's College (Bedford College). The method which he chose for presenting the subject was most original. His poem was to describe a woman's university founded by a noble but fanatical girl, determined to keep it entirely free from male contamination. In order that the discussion might be as free from prejudice as possible, he took great pains to avoid colouring it by association with any historical age or people. Above all, the treatment had to be light (so as to avoid arousing political prejudice), poetical and imaginative. To achieve this, he had recourse to a far more dramatic method of presentation than he had ever attempted before, making the arguments speak through the emotions and actions of the characters and giving the persons of the drama as much reality as he could.

He put an immense amount of work into *The Princess*, writing and rewriting it many times. The result was a poem the

merit of which is still the subject of much controversy—particularly amongst those who lack a sense of humour—a brilliant medley of a hundred and seventy pages, in which scenes of great power and pathos alternate with exquisite lyrics and passages of flashing burlesque. Yet, throughout, the atmosphere of the fantastic story is most delicately maintained, and underlying all the extravagance is a foundation of massive common-sense, which is peculiarly Tennysonian. *The Princess* was published in November, 1847, and at first met with a great deal of unintelligent criticism but, after a short period of hesitation, it began to gain public favour rapidly, and two thousand copies were sold in less than twelve months.

Alfred's financial position was now easier and he was able to indulge the love of travel which he had always gratified when he could. During the next year or two, in spite of continued ill-health and another prolonged visit to a water cure, he made extensive tours in Ireland, Cornwall and Scotland. The visit to Cornwall was chiefly due to his long-standing desire to take up what he considered the greatest of all poetic subjects for an Englishman, the Arthurian Legend. He was also working on the series of 'Elegies' for Arthur Hallam, which had occupied him intermittently since 1833. He had jotted these down as they occurred to him, wherever he might happen to be, but he had never contemplated weaving them into a single whole, until he suddenly realized how many he had written and how easily they seemed to fit together into a progressive sequence. He showed them to Moxon, who was eager to publish them, but Alfred could not make up his mind to this, although he fully realized how much their success might mean to him, for his increasing reputation and the improved receipts from his poems were making him think once more of the possibility of securing a renewal of his engagement to Emily Sellwood. There was still the difficulty about Charles's marriage but, late in 1849, Charles and Louisa were reunited and that obstacle was removed. Alfred wasted no time. He met Charles in London in December and arranged that he should approach Mr. Sellwood without delay. With his usual reticence about his personal affairs, he told no one what was happening, and there is very little record of the actual course of events. Apparently there was still some hesitation on the part of the Sellwoods, but, in the early spring, Alfred caused Emily to be sent a preliminary print of the 'Elegies', as they were still called. This 'Spirit monument, beautiful and grand', completely dispelled her hesitation. Two months later (on 1st June) *In Memoriam* was published, the title having been suggested by Emily, and on 13th June, she and Alfred were married. In a few weeks five thousand copies of the book were sold and, in

November, chiefly owing to the admiration felt by the Prince Consort for *In Memoriam*, Tennyson was appointed Poet Laureate, in succession to Wordsworth, who had died in the spring.

It was surprising to contemporary critics that a poem of nearly a thousand stanzas, so desultorily composed, in what might have proved so monotonous a metre, about a young man who had been entirely unknown to the general public and whose name was not even mentioned, should have won such immediate popularity.

According to A. C. Bradley *In Memoriam* describes the passage of the bereaved spirit 'from the first stupor and confusion of grief, through a growing acquiescence, often disturbed by the recurrence of pain, to an almost unclouded peace and joy'. Love longs at first simply for the restoration of the sensible presence. The poet tortures himself with speculation as to the nature of life and death and the fear that he will never hold personal converse with his friend again. Gradually thought is concentrated on that which lives—the beauty of the beloved soul—and love is actually found to be strengthened through suffering and no longer a source of pain. Moreover the poet, instead of being withdrawn by sorrow from other interests, finds his heart opening to human sympathy and new friendships. He is able to be fired once more by 'the mighty hopes that make us men', by the confidence that man is progressive and, in some sense, immortal. In the same way he ceases to torture himself with intellectual speculation. He realizes that Arthur has passed beyond his comprehension, becoming something at once 'known and unknown', 'human and divine', 'past, present and to be', more deeply loved than ever, though now 'darklier understood'; a spirit which permeates and encircles the spirit of the still living friend and which that friend can never lose, either in life or when, in death, he closes

with all we loved
and all we flow from, soul in soul.

Such a conclusion could hardly have been expected to make a strong appeal to a generation still, for the most part, able to find satisfaction in the doctrines of the established churches, by some of whose representatives *In Memoriam* was attacked as definitely anti-Christian. But the poem had other grounds of appeal—in its all-pervading humanity, in the exquisite touches of pathos by which its message of love and hope is everywhere reinforced, and in the skill with which every phase of the spiritual drama is reflected in the varying moods of the English countryside and the ever-changing beauty and majesty of English skies. These qualities spoke immediately and strongly to the

whole Anglo-Saxon race and by the end of 1850 the author had become the acknowledged leader of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Alfred shouldered his new obligations manfully. He attended a levee, squeezed into little Mr. Rogers's very tight Court suit, and prefaced the seventh edition of his volumes of 1842, which was then in the press, with some fine dedicatory lines to the Queen. That spring he settled Emily at Chapel House, Montpelier Row, Twickenham, which was to be their home for two and a half years.

The chief benefit which Twickenham brought to Tennyson was the foundation of some most valuable friendships, particularly with Robert and Elizabeth Browning and with Benjamin Jowett, champion of University Reform, translator of Plato and stormy petrel of religious controversy. But Alfred did not care for the place, finding it too confined and too much exposed to the influx of visitors from London. Moreover, the early part of his stay there was saddened by the still-birth of his first child, and he was much disturbed by the threats of war with France, which arose from Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* and aggressive continental policy. Having grown up under the shadow of the first Napoleon, he felt that the country was seriously endangered by its lack of military preparation, and contributed a number of patriotic poems to the Press, concealing his authorship under pseudonyms for fear that the disclosure of his name might embarrass the Queen. In the midst of this agitation the aged Duke of Wellington died, and Tennyson, stirred by his deep admiration for the great soldier and statesman, and by his alarm at the dangers which seemed to threaten the country, composed the famous funeral ode which, although it met with little but adverse criticism at the time, is among the finest of his works.

He would probably have left Twickenham earlier but for the birth of his son, Hallam, in August, 1852. As soon as Emily had sufficiently recovered, they began looking for a new home farther away from London, but it was not until the autumn of 1853 that his rather exacting requirements were met by the discovery of Farringford, near Freshwater, at the western end of the Isle of Wight, then a most remote corner of England, a paradise of birds and butterflies, with a wealth of geological interest and a wonderful variety of scenery in its towering white cliffs, rolling downs and wide views over sea, straits and forest. At Farringford, devotedly watched and cared for by Emily, he was able to settle down to a life of wholesome regularity and varied interests, which came as near to happiness as his nervous and irritable temperament would allow. He loved to work in his garden, with its rough copses, green glades and sloping lawns, and, later, about the small farm which he added

to the estate. He walked far and wide about the island, studying its geology and revelling in the ever-varying moods of sea and sky; he made friends with shepherds, coastguards and fishermen, with whom he loved to talk about their lives and beliefs, hoping for some ray of light on the great metaphysical and religious questions which still oppressed him. Under the influence of Jowett he began to study philosophy and, at night, when he and Emily were alone, would read to her from the Authorized Version of the Bible, from the great writers of England, Greece and Rome or from Dante, Goethe or Molière. Rather cautiously he made acquaintance with the neighbouring gentry, and with Sir John Simeon, Squire of Swainston, eight miles to the east of Farringford, he formed a friendship the intensity of which is shown by the beautiful lines *In the Garden at Swainston*, written on Simeon's death in 1870 (see page 561).

In March, 1854, his second son, Lionel, was born, and soon afterwards he settled down to the first big piece of work which he had tackled since his marriage. He had been experimenting with a poem about Merlin, but when a new subject fired his imagination he laid this aside. The new subject was also partly an old one, for two of the most effective sections of the poem (*Maud*) which he made out of it ('See what a lovely shell' and 'O that 'twere possible') had been sketched out twenty years or more before. Now there evolved in his mind a strange story which built itself round the figure of a morbid, solitary boy, victim (like Tennyson himself) of a family tragedy. Farringford, the lonely house, 'half-hid in the gleaming wood', from which the roar of the sea and the scream of the down-dragged shingle could be heard on stormy nights, and Swainston, with its famous cedars, supplied the scene, and by degrees the subjects which were chiefly occupying his mind at the time, began to link themselves with the story. These sprang from talks which he had had with F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley, the pioneers of Christian Socialism, about the terrible conditions of life in our rapidly growing industrial cities, and from the war fever that was sweeping through England in those summer months of 1854 which saw the beginning of operations in the Crimea. He adopted a most difficult form in which to embody this complex conception, a lyrical monologue, in which the young man describes his moods and reactions to the tragic events of the story; his love affair with Maud, thwarted by her family; the death of her brother at his hands in a duel; his own madness; his re-integration of spirit through volunteering for the Crimean War. The thrilling events of the war were very much in the poet's mind while he was working at the new poem, and he drew from them the famous ballad on the *Charge*

of the *Light Brigade* at Balaclava. He had this poem printed and circulated to the troops, and was deeply touched when he heard how delighted the men were with it. "Half are singing it and all want to have it in black and white, so as to read what has so taken them," wrote a chaplain serving in the military hospital at Scutari.

Maud was published in July, 1855, with the Wellington ode, *The Brook*, *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and some other short poems. To his intense disappointment it met with almost universal reprobation. He had thrown the whole passion of his nature into this strange story of love and madness, and knew that he had never written with more fire or greater mastery of language and rhythm. He could not understand the public obtuseness and, with characteristic simplicity, poured out his woes to friends and acquaintances in unrestrained lamentation. But the form of the poem was novel and difficult, its metrical freedom and the conversational tone of much of the writing violated literary convention, the attacks on the industrial system antagonized the middle classes, and the Radicals were scandalized by its apparent eulogy of war. It seemed an outrage that the author of *In Memoriam* should descend to such hysterical extravagance. But the storm was short-lived. Public taste suddenly veered round. The first edition of ten thousand copies was sold, and a second impression issued, before the end of the year. Indeed, the flurry actually did good by bringing the poet more than ever into the public eye. He began to be sought after by literary hostesses and, although still exceedingly cautious about accepting invitations, was soon a well-known visitor at Little Holland House, Kensington, the home of the Thoby Prinseps, whose acquaintance he had made at Twickenham. There he would meet G. F. Watts, D. G. Rossetti, Ruskin, Holman Hunt, George Eliot and (when in England) Robert Browning. Though these incursions into society did little to diminish his shyness and diffidence, they had a very distinct value as a tonic and stimulant, which, as time went on, he fully realized.

His meetings with Rossetti and Holman Hunt may have encouraged him to set to work seriously on the Arthurian Legends, which had inspired his *Morte d'Arthur* twenty years before and which he had taken up and dropped again two or three times since. It is not clear exactly what plan he had in mind when he took up the Merlin story again at the end of 1855, although he had obviously abandoned the idea of an epic poem covering the whole legend of the Round Table in a continuous narrative. Probably he felt that this was not suited to his genius, which had found its fullest expression in the lyric and idyllic forms. But he evidently had in mind the possibility of covering

in one way or another the full sequence of the tragedy; the mysterious coming of Arthur; his victorious wars against the Romans and the Heathen; his formation of the Round Table and marriage with Guinevere; the guilty love of Lancelot and the Queen; the gradual demoralization of the Order, hastened by the reckless quest of the Grail; the treachery of Modred, leading to the final dissolution of the Round Table and Arthur's mystic voyage to Avalon to be healed of his wounds. It is also certain that he would not have attempted to re-write the old legends if they had not seemed to him full of a symbolism which might have great significance for his own time. He had long been haunted by the thought that the new commercialism, which he had attacked so bitterly in *Maud*, was corrupting much of what had been best in English political and social life, while the materialist philosophy of Mill, Comte, Herbert Spencer and their followers was sapping the foundations of religious faith. If these tendencies continued, he feared the development of some conflict in which Christian civilization would be submerged as was Arthur's mystic Order in 'the last dim battle in the West'. This kind of symbolism was, however, largely subconscious. He felt no need to twist or colour his story in order to express it. Indeed, his only difficulty was in the choice of material. His mind was already saturated with the infinite ramifications of Arthurian mythology, which he had studied widely in the old authorities, English, Welsh and French, and now, when he sat down to his tale of Merlin, he found that the work went with such speed, that it was finished by the end of January, 1856. For his next idyll he chose the story of Geraint, founded on a tale in the Welsh *Mabinogion*. This was not written so easily as its predecessor and he was not able to start on the third story, that of Guinevere's infidelity and fall, until after the summer holiday of 1857. He finished this in the spring of 1858 and the fourth tale, with which he planned to complete his new volume, *Lancelot and Elaine*, was ready for the printers early in the ensuing year.

The book was published at the end of June and, on the whole, met with an enthusiastic reception. Alfred, encouraged by friends, to whom he had read or circulated the poems in advance, had evidently expected this, for he had arranged for an edition of forty thousand copies at his own cost. He now took all the risks of publication and all the profits, remunerating the publishers by a commission only. Of these forty thousand copies, ten thousand were sold in the first week. The poet was well satisfied with this result and felt entitled to a good holiday. He had travelled regularly whenever he could afford it, driving with Emily through Southern France to Italy in 1852 and making trips to the Highlands (to stay with the Duke of Argyll)

in 1857 and to Scandinavia¹ in 1858. Now he determined to carry out a long-standing ambition by visiting Portugal, Spain and North Africa. In the middle of August he set out on the sea voyage to Lisbon with his friend F. T. Palgrave. But the tour was not altogether a success, the fleas and the heat proving too much for the sensitive poet, who became nervous about his health and returned to England in September, without travelling farther than Portugal.

He now had to make up his mind about his next book. He had felt so content with the first four Idylls that he had begun considering further Arthurian stories. But he soon came up against certain difficulties. Two essential features of his scheme were the Grail story and the death of Arthur. The latter he had already written in a rather different style to that adopted in the four idylls of 1859, and he felt that he could not re-write it and doubted whether it would fit in with the new work. The Grail story caused him even more serious difficulty. Many friends and admirers (including Lord Macaulay and the Princess Royal) had urged him to make this his next subject, but he doubted whether a modern poet could handle such a theme without irreverence. The old writers had believed intensely in the Legend, which a modern writer could not do, and, unless one did believe in it, how could one treat it sincerely and satisfactorily? He felt no need of haste, for his already published work was selling well and there was plenty to occupy his mind. His children had, during the past few years, steadily absorbed more and more of his interest. Remembering his own tortured childhood, he had made up his mind that they should have every chance of a healthy, happy and free development. As soon as they were old enough, he took special pains to interest them in the birds, beasts and flowers of the countryside and the movements of moon and stars. He delighted in reading to them, in helping them to dramatize nursery rhymes (of which he had made a considerable collection in his youth) and fairy tales, and in adapting to their childish imaginations the great stories of antiquity, particularly from Homer and the Bible. From a very early age they were an integral part of the family life. Men like Jowett and Simeon were favourite playfellows, and the children would often wait at table or come down after dinner to enjoy the dessert and a sip of wine or punch.

This intimate family life was to find a recorder in Julia Margaret Cameron, sister of Mrs. Thoby Prinsep, who settled with her husband and children in Freshwater in 1860, and soon afterwards began to experiment with the still primitive art of photography. She was ruthless in the pursuit of her hobby, utterly careless of appearances, extravagantly idealistic and generous, but always with a shrewd eye for the weaknesses of

her idols. Alfred soon became one of her most revered heroes, and she played a great part in his life during the next fifteen years.

With such friends close at hand, with the constant flow of visitors from the mainland, with the ever-growing charm of the children's development and the regular tour in the summer, life at Farringford was full of interest. But the poet was, as always, restless and nervous until he could get to grips with another important piece of work, and this he did not yet see his way to do. Meanwhile an occurrence took place which was to have a great effect on his future.

On 14th December, 1860, the country was deeply shocked by the death of the Prince Consort. Alfred had always had an intense and romantic respect for the Queen, and he knew how much he owed to the Prince's admiration for his poetry. He felt, therefore, that here was an occasion when the Queen's chosen poet should put forth all his powers in a tribute to the dead Prince, which should also be an expression of the nation's sympathy and affection for the bereaved woman. A new edition of the *Idylls* of 1859 was then in the press, and he decided that his tribute should take the form of a Prefatory dedication to Prince Albert's memory. He wrote with such inspiration that the poem, one of the finest examples of his blank verse, was finished and in type by 9th January. The lines touched the Queen deeply and, during the next few weeks she often turned to *In Memoriam* for consolation. As a result, she sent Tennyson a message that she would like to see him when she was next at Osborne. The visit took place on 14th April and made a deep impression on both. Alfred was struck with the Queen's 'stately innocence' and self-possession in her grief; she felt intensely the warmth and tenderness of his heart and the greatness of his mind. On leaving, he asked permission to bring his boys to see her, feeling that it might help 'to keep them loyal in the troublous times to come'. The second visit took place about a year later. Thus was begun the romantic and chivalrous relation between Queen Victoria and her Laureate, which lasted until the end of his life and is a unique and touching episode in the history of English literature.

The year passed without any solution of the Grail problem and by Christmas Tennyson had decided that his next big piece of work should be founded on a story told him by the sculptor, Thomas Woolner, about a shipwrecked sailor who, after years of isolation on a desert island, comes home to find that his wife, thinking him dead, has married his dearest friend. Tennyson did not hurry the composition of this poem, filling in the time with experimental work of various kinds. By the end of 1863 he had ready for publication a volume which came out

in the spring of the following year. In addition to *Enoch Arden*, which gave its title to the volume, and has proved the most widely popular of all his poems, it included *Aylmer's Field*, another long but less successful narrative, *The Grandmother*, *Tithonus*, a classical poem not inferior to *Ulysses*, *The Northern Farmer—Old Style*, the first of his remarkable series of poems in the Lincolnshire dialect, showing a vein of sardonic humour and life-like characterization hitherto unsuspected, some beautiful lyrics and a small section of 'Experiments', the most striking of which were *Boadicea* and the *Alcaics* to Milton. It was a strong and well-varied collection and proved the most successful volume that he ever published. The reviews were almost universally favourable. *Blackwood's*, his old enemy, concluded its notice with the words: "whether we consider the gifts bestowed on its author or the use to which he puts them, we have reason to render thanks that we have lived to hear such a poet sing and that we may hope to live to hear him sing again".

There followed two or three unsettled years, for Alfred still could not see how to deal with the Grail legend. He thought of attempting to found a great poem on one of his favourite Old Testament books such as *Job* or the *Song of Songs*, and even began to study Hebrew for the purpose, but without result. Then, in the spring of 1865, the boys went away to a boarding-school. This was a severe wrench and he began to feel restless at Farringford. He still loved the place, but he felt cut off there in the winter from London life which, now that his intimate friends included men like Browning, Gladstone, Arthur Stanley, the ever delightful Dean of Westminster, and Norman Lockyer, the great astronomer, meant a great deal to him. In the summer, on the other hand, Freshwater was becoming intolerable, because of the crowd of visitors who peered over his walls and fences, nudged and whispered when he passed them out of doors, and even crept covertly up to the house and stared at him through the windows.

He and Emily now decided that they must look for a summer refuge nearer London and more secure from intrusion. This was a difficult task, but at last in 1867, they found an ideal site on Blackdown in Sussex, about forty miles from London. This commanded from its elevation of eight hundred feet a superb view across the Weald to the South Downs, with 'one grey glimpse of sea' through a gap near Chanctonbury Ring. It only needed a great river 'looping through' the plain, Alfred said, to be absolutely perfect. The site was bought and plans for the building put in hand forthwith. The architect was young James Knowles, an Arthurian enthusiast with whom Alfred had made acquaintance a short time before, and who was to become one of his closest friends.

The building of the new house seemed to inspire him and, at last, he perceived how to deal with the Holy Grail; he would make honest, humble Sir Percivale, one of the three who saw the vision, tell the story after his retirement from the world of wars and tournaments to the peace of a monastery. He started work in September, 1868, and finished the poem in a few weeks. Browning and others approved it warmly and, after a dash to Paris with Frederick Locker, Dean Stanley's brother-in-law, he began work on *The Coming of Arthur*, a brief introductory idyll describing the birth, marriage and crowning of the King. Progress with this was interrupted by the foundation, as the result of a discussion between Tennyson and the astronomer Charles Pritchard at Knowles's house, of the Metaphysical Society. Knowles undertook to be secretary and convener if Tennyson would be one of the first members. The aim of the society was to 'submit to searching criticism the intellectual foundations of the spreading positivism and agnosticism', and it started with a superlatively distinguished list of members, including anglican churchmen, catholics, unitarians, positivists, rationalists, agnostics, scientists and metaphysicians. Before the first meeting was held on 21st April, 1869, Tennyson had completed *The Coming of Arthur* and begun the next idyll, the story of Pelleas and Ettarre. A few weeks afterwards he dashed off on a memorable month's tour in Switzerland with Locker and, within a few days of his return, he and Emily moved into the new house, which they called Aldworth, after the village in Berkshire from which her family had come. By the middle of September he had finished *Pelleas and Ettarre* and added one hundred and eighty lines to the old *Morte d'Arthur*, to make it fit in with the preceding idyll *Guinevere*. Before the end of the year the three new idylls and the revised *Passing of Arthur* were published, and Tennyson was already at work on a new idyll *Gareth and Lynette*, which he felt was needed to improve the sequence between *The Coming of Arthur* and *Geraint and Enid*.

The new volume, which included three poems reflecting Tennyson's increased interest in metaphysics, *The Higher Pantheism*, *Lucretius* and *Flower in the Crannied Wall*, was on the whole favourably received, though some critics felt that the poet had not yet succeeded in imparting an effectively co-ordinated design to his Arthurian saga. There was also considerable objection from lovers of the old romances to the symbolism with which he had invested them. This was now much clearer than in the idylls of 1859, although subsequent commentators have tended to attempt much too precise and elaborate interpretations. As Tennyson himself said in an often quoted aphorism: "Poetry is like shot silk with many glancing colours.

Every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability and understanding and his sympathy with the poet."

Tennyson now had no doubt about the importance of the idylls in his life's work, and during the next three years he made a final effort to strengthen the weak places in the sequence by completing *Gareth and Lynette*, and composing two new idylls, *The Last Tournament*, to go immediately before *Guinevere*, and *Balin and Balan*, to stand between *Merlin and Vivien* and *Pelleas and Ettarre*. He also considerably improved *The Coming of Arthur*, and added about one hundred and fifty lines to *Merlin and Vivien*. *Gareth and Lynette* was published at the end of 1872, but *Balin and Balan* he held back until 1885, and the completed series was not published together until 1889, by which time the poet had been able to introduce a number of small alterations into the idylls of 1859, to make them more harmonious in style with the later poems. Thus the completed series was not published until nearly thirty years after the first instalment of 1859 and sixteen years after the virtual completion of the work which one may put in 1874. I know of no reason for this strange delay.

With the end of this prolonged and absorbing chapter in his life, Tennyson felt the need for a fresh start. He had completed his work in the field of Epic and had thoroughly explored the shorter poetic forms, lyric, idyll, and dramatic monologue. Only one important field remained untouched. Ever since *The Devil and the Lady*, he had been interested in the drama, and he had carefully and continually studied the great dramatic literatures of Ancient Greece and Elizabethan England, as well as the plays of Molière, Schiller and Goethe. He had been a frequent visitor to the London theatres and had many friends in theatrical circles, such as Tom Taylor, the Alfred Wigans, and Ellen Terry, and he had recently made the acquaintance of Henry Irving, whose *Hamlet* had just taken London by storm, making the Lyceum the Mecca of playgoers. The time seemed propitious, and he determined that his next task should be an endeavour to establish himself in the field of poetic drama. In doing this he was taking a considerable risk, for he had written no drama for fifty years, and a failure might seriously injure his position with the public, who had come to know and love him as an idyllic and lyric poet. But he decided that the risk must be taken. For his first series of subjects he determined to turn to English history, selecting three (the Norman Conquest, Becket, and Queen Mary) in which the controversy between England and the Roman Church had played an important part, and which had not been treated by Shakespeare, whose great cycle of historical plays he hoped in some way to supplement. This choice of subject was probably, in part at least,

the result of the close friendship which he had recently formed with his neighbour in the Isle of Wight, W. G. Ward, who had been the first of the leaders of the Oxford Movement to join the Roman Catholic Church and was now one of the most formidable champions of Catholic orthodoxy. To prepare himself for the great task ahead of him, Alfred made another visit to the Pyrenees, where he took twenty-mile tramps, climbed like a young man, and walked for the last time through the Valley of Cauteretz, which he had visited with Arthur Hallam over forty years before. On his return to Farringford, a grievous blow struck him. Emily, who had been not only his intimate and entirely trusted counsellor but also his secretary and business manager, fell seriously ill, and it became evident that she would not again be able to relieve him of all the drudgery which she had so long and so willingly taken on her shoulders. The loss to Alfred, coming on the brink of his great new adventure, was severe, for he knew that it was impossible to over-estimate what he owed to her unselfish affection, high intelligence and strong idealism. He knew, too, that only an iron will had carried her frail physique through all the difficulties and strains which, as his wife, she had had to encounter during the past five-and-twenty years. Luckily there was someone ready to make the necessary sacrifice; Hallam, his elder son, who was now at Trinity, came down, without waiting to take his degree, to act in her place.

As Tennyson's plays are not covered in the present selection, I will not deal at length with his dramatic period. His first play, *Queen Mary*, covered the last stages of the religious struggle which preceded the Reformation in England. He prepared for it by an intense study of the authorities, ancient and modern. The result was a distinguished and beautiful work, fine both in scope and structure; not an actable play, but the dramatic panorama of an age. The critics were not very enthusiastic, but so great was the lure of the poet's fame, that, within a year of its publication (May, 1875), a much mutilated version was put on at the Lyceum with Irving as Philip of Spain. Although this only ran for a few weeks, Tennyson was encouraged to proceed immediately with his second subject, *Harold*, and there is no doubt that he hoped to make this a play suitable for stage production. It was no less carefully studied than *Queen Mary*, but very much shorter and less diffuse in scope. Moreover, it dealt with the Norman Conquest, a subject which is of abiding interest to English people, and followed much more closely normal methods of dramatic construction, including a theme of female love and jealousy.

The play was published in November, 1876, but in spite of all its advantages over *Queen Mary* and of some very strong

dramatic scenes, no one came forward to produce it on the stage. This was probably due to the lack of any suitable part for Irving, though certain inherent defects in the play no doubt told against it. The female parts were rather weak and melodramatic, the writing and characterization less effective than in Tennyson's first play and less suited to the period. Once more the critics were lukewarm, but the poet was not to be deterred. Without waiting to see what *Harold's* fate would be, he immediately set about the preparation of his third historical drama, on the theme of *Becket*, intending this time to do his very best to create a really suitable part for Irving. He took time over the work, and it was not until early in 1879 that he had the first version of the play printed and submitted it to Irving. *Becket*, when ultimately produced after the poet's death, proved one of Irving's greatest and most enduring successes. At first, however, he could not see how to adapt it for the stage and suggested that Tennyson should write him a short play. At the time Tennyson was hard at work on a poetic comedy founded on a story by Boccaccio, a pleasantly written treatment of a rather extravagant subject. He soon completed this and it was produced by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal at the St. James's Theatre in December, under the title *The Falcon*, and ran for sixty-seven nights. Meanwhile, he had made good progress with the new play for Irving, taken from a tale of Plutarch's and to be called *The Cup*. Work on this was interrupted by the loss, at the end of April, of his favourite brother Charles, followed in less than a month by the death of Charles's wife, Emily's sister, Louisa. This double loss severely affected Alfred's health for a time, and, at the end of June, 1880, on his doctor's advice, he took a long tour to the Tyrol and Venice, composing on the way his beautiful lyric *Frater Ave atque Vale* (see page 561). The rest of the year was occupied in the preparation of a volume of miscellaneous poems composed in the intervals of play-writing; a strong and varied collection for a man of seventy-one who, during the past six years, had written three long historical dramas and two short plays. It contained the two great fighting ballads, *The Revenge* and *The Defence of Lucknow*; *Rizpah*, a dramatic monologue of great power and grimness; *The Northern Cobbler* and *The Village Wife*, two of the best of the Lincolnshire poems; *The Voyage of Maeldune*, in which the poet expressed with remarkable success the mystical exuberance of Keltic legend; *de Profundis*, which he had begun immediately after the birth of his son Hallam in 1852, but left unfinished. His increasing grasp of metaphysical problems enabled him to take it up again and make it one of the finest of his philosophical poems.

The public were delighted to find Tennyson returning at

last to the kind of work which they had come to expect from him and this volume enjoyed a success almost equal to that of 1864.

He now put the final touches to *The Cup*, which, to his great satisfaction, was accepted by Irving and put on at the Lyceum with characteristic lavishness in July, 1881. Ellen Terry and William Terris filled the other leading parts, and the play, which is very economically and strongly written, though rather the outline of a drama than a full-scale tragedy, ran very successfully for one hundred and twenty-seven nights. But still Irving could not see his way to adapt *Becket* for the stage. Instead, he suggested new subjects, including Robin Hood. Tennyson took up this idea at once and visited Sherwood Forest to absorb the woodland atmosphere. The new play, which was finished very quickly, turned out to be a charming pastoral comedy. This was not what Irving wanted, and he declined it. Tennyson was not to be turned from his course by any disappointment. He immediately set to work upon an idea in which he had been strongly encouraged by some of his friends, a village tragedy, *The Promise of May*, founded on the lives of the Lincolnshire farmers and peasants whom he knew so well. This was completed and accepted by Mrs. Bernard Beere (after being rejected by Irving and the Kendals) and put on at the Globe on 11th November, 1882.

It was unfortunate that he had undertaken this work at a time when his mind was seriously disturbed by the growing strength of the Rationalist movement under its brilliant young leaders John Morley, Leslie Stephen and Frederic Harrison. He had recently aroused the antagonism of the Rationalist and Radical press by a very violent poem, *Despair* (see page 280), which was published in James Knowles's Review *The Nineteenth Century* in November, 1881. The anti-rationalist complex coloured and distorted the new play which, although it contained some fine denunciatory passages, and some excellent scenes of comedy and pathos when the farmers and rustics were on the stage, was for the most part unreal and unconvincing and proved a disastrous failure.

Tennyson was bitterly disappointed. He had had great hopes of the play and it was already printed with a view to immediate publication. He now withdrew it, and had the type distributed. From that moment he abandoned play-writing altogether.

The year 1883 was one of great importance to Tennyson. During the spring and summer the Queen had been much distressed by the death of her servant, John Brown, and afterwards by injuries from a fall which kept her inactive for several months. Tennyson's letters of sympathy pleased her greatly, and she wrote telling him that she had been reading *In Memoriam*

again and would like to see him quite informally at Osborne. Though much shaken by the death of Edward FitzGerald, Alfred travelled to the Isle of Wight and talked with her for nearly an hour in the Prince Consort's room. The Queen was much moved by their talk and decided to suggest to Mr. Gladstone (who was then Prime Minister) that he should be offered a peerage. Ten years earlier there had been suggestions of a baronetcy but this Alfred had declined. Gladstone heartily endorsed the suggestion of a peerage, and an excellent opportunity of sounding the poet on the subject occurred a few weeks later, when the two men were together on a tour round the North of Scotland and over to Denmark, in Sir Donald Currie's steam-yacht *Pembroke Castle*. Tennyson accepted the suggestion with considerable reluctance. He knew that it would expose him to malicious attack from the left, and he shrank from undertaking new obligations in his seventy-fifth year. Moreover, he could not rid himself of the fear that if, as he suspected, days of revolutionary change were approaching, a hereditary honour might be more of an embarrassment than a privilege to his descendants. On the other hand, it seemed to him a fine thing that his heirs, particularly Hallam, who had sacrificed his own career for his father's sake, should be able to take a place in what he considered to be the finest legislative assembly in the world.

As he feared, the news of his acceptance was received with a fusillade of lampoons and spiteful parodies in the Radical press, which had for some years never missed an opportunity of ridiculing his enthusiastic support of the Queen and his belief, so often and so strongly expressed, in Britain's Imperial destiny. Then, within a few months of taking his seat in the Chamber, he became involved in a very delicate negotiation over the Bill introduced by Gladstone for the extension of the franchise. He succeeded in securing concessions from the Prime Minister which satisfied the opposition in the Lords, and the Bill, which enfranchised over two million of Her Majesty's subjects, was passed into law. Although he liked Gladstone personally as much as ever, he had for some time been greatly disturbed by his Imperial policy. These negotiations added to his disquiet, and this was further increased by the disastrous events in the Sudan, which culminated in the death, in 1885, of his friend and hero, General Gordon.

All this had considerably interfered with the poet's creative work but, during 1884, he came to the conclusion that it was no use waiting any longer for Irving and, at the end of the year, in order to clear the way for another miscellaneous volume, he published *Becket*, *The Cup* and *The Falcon*.

The year 1885 was devoted to the preparation of the new

volume which was published in November under the title *Tiresias and Other Poems*. It included *Balin and Balan*, touching tributes to 'Fitz' and the poet's brother Charles, *To Virgil* and *Frater Ave atque Vale*, two of Tennyson's most beautiful lyrics, and the stirring *Charge of the Heavy Brigade*. In addition, there were several poems which clearly showed the poet's strong opposition to the political and spiritual tendencies of the time. These were *Freedom*, *Tiresias*, *Despair*, and *The Ancient Sage*, a favourite poem of Jowett's. The volume, which was dedicated to Robert Browning, was enthusiastically welcomed by the critics and the public, but the poet's pleasure in this was overcast by the serious illness of his second son, Lionel, in India. After hanging for weeks between life and death, Lionel died at sea on 25th April, leaving a young wife, the daughter of Tennyson's valued friend Frederick Locker, and three small children. The thought of this calamity haunted the poet until the end of his life. Its immediate effect was to intensify his familiar moods of depression and, in December, he startled the public with a poem called *Sixty Years After*, a sequel to *Locksley Hall*, in which through the mouth of the unstable and passionate hero of the earlier poem, he attacked, with a violence surpassing even the fiery invective of *Maud*, what he considered the fallacies and follies of a materialistic age, blindly confident in the inevitability of progress and the infallibility of science. It is significant of the intense feeling which actuated the poet that he included in the same volume *The Promise of May*, which he had withdrawn from the press three years before. He evidently still felt—perhaps felt more than ever—that, in spite of its ignominious failure on the stage, it had a vital message for the time.

The fierce disillusion of *Sixty Years After* caused an even greater stir in the Radical camp than *Maud* had done thirty years before. It seemed a deliberate depreciation of all the social and economic progress of the last half century. So strong was the feeling, that Mr. Gladstone took up the challenge with an elaborately deferential article in the *Nineteenth Century*, in which he gave an impressive survey of the reforms effected by Parliament since 1832, and suggested that the opinions expressed in the poem were entirely dramatic, and must not be taken as an authoritative estimate of the time. The old statesman concluded his article with a reference to the approaching Jubilee of Queen Victoria and a plea that this should not be 'marred with tragic notes'. In this, as in many other matters, the Queen probably agreed more with her Poet Laureate than with the Prime Minister, and it was with her approval, possibly even on her suggestion, that Tennyson included in his Jubilee Ode of the following year the final section (XI) beginning:

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Are there thunders moaning in the distance?
Are there spectres moving in the darkness? . . .

There was another element in *Sixty Years After*, the significance of which hardly anyone can have realized, for hardly anyone knew the facts about Tennyson's early life. The poem ends on a note of reconciliation between the hero of Locksley Hall and his successful rival for Amy's hand. Here there was clearly a sublimation of Alfred's largely subconscious feelings about the Bayons family, with whom he had, since Charles d'Eyncourt's death some twenty years before, become gradually more and more friendly. His reconciliation now embraced, in memory, even the old man of the Wolds.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,
All his virtues—I forgive them—black in white above his bones.

Surely these lines must have come to the poet one day when standing in the chancel of Tealby Church and reading, rather ruefully, the sepulchral eulogy of George Clayton Tennyson upon its southern wall.

Whatever might be thought of the political opinions expressed in *Sixty Years After*, there was no denying its vitality and fire, and indeed Tennyson, though now in his seventy-seventh year, showed few signs of age. He was writing energetically (completing *Owd Roä*, one of the raciest of his Lincolnshire poems, full of humour and descriptive power) and eagerly negotiating for new productions of his plays. In August, 1887, he went for a yachting cruise round the south and west coasts, and visited his brother Frederick in Jersey on the way. In the summer of the next year he made a tour through West Sussex. Then, in September, he was suddenly struck down with an attack of rheumatic gout, brought on by walking, as he often did, in heavy rain without an umbrella. So severe was the attack that the doctors feared he would never recover. But by May, 1889, he seemed entirely fit again and at the end of the month he greatly enjoyed a cruise in Lord Brassey's famous yacht *Sunbeam*.

His eightieth birthday, 6th August, found him at Aldworth, well and cheerful. Letters and telegrams came in a torrent. The Queen wrote with her own hand, though overwhelmed with business because of the visit of her grandson the Emperor of Germany. Swinburne sent a poem of congratulation and a letter in which he referred to the immense debt which he owed to Tennyson's poetry, a debt which "has been accumulating ever since I was twelve years old". Browning, too, wrote associating himself with "the universal pride of our country in your glory, and in its hope that for many and many a year we may have your very self among us. . . ." Tennyson replied, "I thank you

with all my whole heart and my whole being for your noble and affectionate letter, and with my whole heart and being I return your friendship. To be loved and appreciated by so great and powerful a nature as yours will be a solace to me and lighten my dark hours during the short time of life that remains to me."

A few weeks later he gave signal proof that neither age nor illness had sapped his spiritual power. Crossing the Solent, on his way back from Aldworth to Farringford in October, he jotted down on the inside of a used envelope the most famous of all his lyrics, *Crossing the Bar*.

In December, on the very day on which his devoted and generous friend Browning died, Tennyson issued a volume of one hundred and seventy-four pages which contained, in addition to this poem, *Demeter and Persephone*; the beautiful lines to the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, with their pathetic reference to Lionel's death; *Owd Roä*; *Vastness*; the charming address to Mary Boyle; the autobiographical poem, *Merlin and the Gleam*, which the poet thought would be all the biography of him that his friends would need, but which no one has ever been able to interpret satisfactorily (see page 574), and some delightful short lyrics. After Tennyson's illness, and the excitement caused by his eightieth birthday, the new volume had been awaited with the keenest interest, twenty thousand copies having been sold before publication. When it appeared, any shortcomings which there may have been were forgotten in the immense effect produced by one poem of four short stanzas, *Crossing the Bar*. During the weeks which followed, this was copied in countless newspapers and periodicals and spoken from countless pulpits in church and chapel throughout the country and Empire. No poem in our language has ever produced so profound an impression on its first appearance. It seemed, as Hallam Tennyson said, the crown of the poet's work.

Tennyson now had less than three years of life remaining to him, but these were packed with activity and interest. He continued to write eagerly and read voraciously, and enjoyed as keenly as ever the society of his friends. On G. F. Watt's suggestion he even took up wood-carving and painting in water-colour. Nor had his old ambitions weakened. In 1890 he was once more in touch with Irving. Again his negotiations came to nothing. But, as had happened fifty years earlier, a ray of hope came from across the Atlantic, for Lawrence Barrett, a well-known American actor, approached him about *Becket*, and in less than a year had completed a stage version of the play and put it into rehearsal. Then, in March, came news of Barrett's death. However, the general scheme of his adaptation seemed

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satisfactory, and Tennyson communicated this to Irving. Meanwhile, there had been negotiations with Augustine Daly and Ada Rehan about *The Foresters*. Terms were agreed upon at the end of the year, and in March, 1892, the play was very successfully launched in New York with every prospect of a long run.

This good news, however, found Alfred in poor health. He had been greatly shocked by the death, on 14th January, of the young Duke of Clarence, the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, within six weeks of the announcement of his engagement to Princess Mary of Teck. Though suffering from the first stage of an attack of influenza, he immediately set about the composition of a poem of consolation for the Royal Family, and in two days completed the lines beginning, 'The bridal garland falls upon the bier' (see page 597), and ending with the famous metaphor:

The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life
His shadow darkens earth: . . .

The poem was finished in two days and sent immediately, with a letter of sympathy, to the Queen, but the effort weakened him a good deal, although three weeks later he was up and about again and able to take his usual afternoon walk. On 19th April, Bram Stoker came with Irving's proposed adaptation of *Becket*. Stoker found the poet weak and much aged, but was amazed at the strength and clarity of his mind. Eager that the great actor's production should not be delayed, he immediately accepted all Irving's revisions. By June he seemed to have recovered much of the ground he had lost and was able to make another cruise in the Channel, visiting Frederick in Jersey for the last time. On his return to Farringford, the Rector of Freshwater, at Emily's request, administered Holy Communion to the household in Alfred's study. Before receiving it, he quoted his own words from Cranmer's speech in *Queen Mary*:

It is but a communion, not a mass—
No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast!

On the next day the family moved to Aldworth. There he seemed at first to pick up strength. He took his daily two or three mile walk and even made a trip to London to see the birds' nests at the Natural History Museum, and discuss the publication of a new volume. He had been working hard at this, having completed two long poems, *Saint Telemachus* and *Akbar's Dream*, the latter of which had involved a considerable amount of research. Though excellently written and constructed, both showed signs of his advanced age, lacking the fire and glow which, until now, had informed even his less successful work.

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In *The Death of Oenone* he had, with fair success, made a sequel in a more austere and concise style to his famous early poem. *The Churchwarden and the Curate* was marked by the sardonic humour which never failed him in his Lincolnshire poems, and *Kapiolani* and the *Hymn to the Sun* were metrical inventions worthy of his best days. But the crown of the volume and, as it proved, his own last testament, was the series of lyrics in which he enshrined his feelings at the approach of death, and restated, for the last time some of those beliefs and precepts on which he had learned to rely in the mental conflicts of the last seventy years. This series included *Doubt and Prayer*, *Faith*, *The Silent Voices*, *God and the Universe*; and the lines on *The Death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale*.

In September he began to weaken, but saw Jowett, who left him without any suspicion that the end was near. Hallam, though anxious about him, thought it safe to make a flying visit to Somersby to see the Rectory, which had been advertised for sale. The poet was anxious to have an account of his old home, which he feared might suffer considerable change at the hands of a purchaser. On the 26th he saw Bram Stoker, who had come to report progress with *Becket*, and Walter Leaf, the Homeric scholar, to whom he declaimed with great power favourite passages from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in the original Greek. Two days later, his publisher came with the proofs of his book, which he carefully went through and corrected. On the 29th, his condition began to deteriorate rapidly, but his powerful will fought on for another week. He knew that he was dying and seemed almost glad that the end of his long struggle was approaching, but it grieved him that he would never see *Becket*. "It will be successful on the stage with Irving," he said, "they did not do me justice with *The Promise of May*. Irving will do me justice." Sometimes the thought of the publicity that would follow his death raised the old morbid horror in his mind: "Ah—that Press will get at me now." On 5th October he looked firmly at the doctor and said the one word—"Death?" Then, as the doctor bowed his head—"That's well."

All that day he asked repeatedly for his Shakespeare but, when it was given him, he could not read. In the afternoon he spoke for the last time a few faint words of blessing to Emily and Hallam, who were watching by his bed. They watched on as consciousness left him and he drifted slowly out of life, drawing his last breath at twenty-five minutes to two on the morning of 6th October, 1892.

The aura of the immense fame which Tennyson had enjoyed during his life clung about his memory until the turn of the

century, intensified in 1897 (the year following Emily Tennyson's death) by the publication of Hallam Tennyson's monumental memoir of his father. With the new century came the inevitable reaction, accompanied by the inevitable misunderstandings and misrepresentations. Even Tennyson's most impressive quality, his extraordinary versatility, told against him. The critics seemed reluctant to admit that a poet who had succeeded in so many styles could be eminent in any. Another cause of misunderstanding was the naïvety which was so marked an element in his personality and which gives such poems as *The May Queen*, *Lady Clara Vere de Vere* and *The Children's Hospital* their peculiar character.

The author of *The English Idylls*, *Will Waterproof*, *The Talking Oak* and the *Poems in the Lincolnshire Dialect*, whose humour would surely have delighted Chaucer and Burns, was said to be entirely lacking in that quality, and even those who were ready to admit his technical achievement, dismissed his intellectual capacity as negligible.

The publication of Mr. Harold Nicolson's brilliant book in 1923 did much to promote a truer appreciation of Tennyson's lyrical and descriptive genius, but many critics have continued to occupy themselves too exclusively with trying to show what he could *not* do. Perhaps a few direct questions may help towards a more constructive outlook. Leaving altogether out of account such secondary achievements as the English Idylls, the classical pieces and the philosophical poems of Tennyson's later life—can any other British poet, born during the nineteenth century or later, match the evocation of mood in the two *Marianas* and *The Lotos-Eaters*, the romance and mystery of *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Holy Grail* and *The Passing of Arthur*, the emotional intensity of *In Memoriam* and *Maud*, the nobility of the Wellington Ode, the pathos of *The Grandmother* and *Lancelot and Elaine*, the grim power of *Rizpah*, the dramatic force of the sixth canto of *The Princess* and the climax of *Enoch Arden*, or the sardonic realism of the Lincolnshire poems? And is there any British poet since Shakespeare who can show so high a level of achievement over so wide a field?

CHARLES TENNYSON

NOTE

A word as to my methods of selection and arrangement.

I dislike extracts. These never give an adequate idea of the poem from which they are taken, and the extract invariably suffers through separation from its context. I have, therefore, included no extracts, except for a scene from *The Devil and the Lady*, which I felt it essential to represent as it is practically unknown to the public. *The Princess* and *The Idylls of the King* I have omitted altogether, but I have been able to give an example of Tennyson's Arthurian writing by including the *Morte d'Arthur* of 1842, which was first published as a complete and separate poem and later included in the *Idylls*. I have, however, included the complete texts of *In Memoriam* and *Maud*, so that the volume, I hope, contains Tennyson's best work as a lyric and idyllic poet (for I do not count the *Idylls of the King* as idyllic) as well as a specimen of his epic writing in the *Morte d'Arthur*.

With regard to arrangement, the chronological method is useful to students who are especially interested in a poet's intellectual and technical development. It is, however, likely to bewilder other readers, particularly in dealing with a poet so versatile and varied as Tennyson. Moreover, this method loses much of its value when applied to a selection. I have therefore grouped a large number of the poems according to type and subject, as follows: *Poems on Classical Subjects*; *English Idylls*; *Dramatic Monologues*; *National and Political Poems*; *Lincolnshire Poems*. The remainder of the shorter poems I have grouped according to the dates of publication, and in all groups the poems are arranged more or less in chronological order. In this way I have, I hope, preserved the time sequence enough to give a fair idea of the poet's development, while enabling the significance and weight of his achievement in so wide a range of style and subject to be fully appreciated.

One more word about chronology. Date of publication is often with Tennyson very far removed from the date of composition. He used to keep poems by him for many years before publishing them and it is often impossible to be sure when a poem was written and when and how much it was revised before reaching its final form. Where the dates of composition and publication were widely separated, I have, so far as possible, indicated this.

With regard to punctuation, Tennyson's methods sometimes appear rather illogical, but I have generally retained his punctuation as it is probable that he adopted it deliberately as a guide to the reading of his poems.

C T.

Juvenilia

Except where otherwise stated
these poems were published
in *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* 1830.
(See Introduction, page 21.)

THE DEVIL AND THE LADY¹

(from Act 1, Scenes 4-5)

MAGUS Well, Amoret, I will believe thee true
 And faithful as the compass to the pole,
 For in life's passage would I always look
 Upon that side of things which sheweth fairest,
 Else were our days but one continued gloom,
 A weary scene of surmise and mistrust.
 The breath of life blows chillingly enow
 To nip our sweetest hopes, and heaven forfend
 That we should waken bootless grievances—
 When the keen Ether is condens'd with frost
 Who would not cleave to th' sunny side o' th' wall?
 And hark ye, Amoret, one word of counsell
 Close thou thy casement early, nor look down
 At sound of querulous serenade or flute
 Wooing the dewy wings o' th' midnight air—
 Regard not thou the glancing of the eye—
 The pressure of the hand—the easy lapse
 Of honey'd words from amatory lips—
 All this regards not—now farewell; may Heaven
 And the good Saints protect thee!

(*Going*)

AMORET The like wish

Attend thee on thy way!

MAGUS (*returning*) If I have said

Ought roughly or in anger—

AMORET Think not of it!

Once more farewell—

MAGUS Farewell, my own good Amoret,

And if my humour should sometimes show testy
 Impute it all unto the love I bear thee,
 Which effervesceth of its own intensity,
 And oftentimes mounts upward and boils over
 Because of its own fervour.

(*Exit*)

AMORET Go thy ways!

Thou yellowest leaf on Autumn's wither'd tree!

Thou sickliest ear of all the sheaf! thou clod!

Thou fireless mixture of Earth's coldest clay!

Thou crazy dotard, crusted o'er with age

¹See Introduction, page 16. The old magician is taking leave of his young wife, having arranged with the Devil to look after her during his absence.

As thick as ice upon a standing pool!
 Thou shrunken, sapless, wizen Grasshopper,
 Consuming the green promise of my youth!
 Go, get thee gone, and evil winds attend thee,
 Thou antidote to love! thou bane of Hope,
 Which like the float o' th' fisher's rod buoys up
 The sinking line and by its fluctuations
 Shows when the pang of Disappointment gnaws
 Beneath it! But to me are both unknown:
 I never more can hope and therefore never
 Can suffer Disappointment.
 He bears a charmed life and will outlast me
 In mustiness of dry longevity,
 Like some tough mummy wither'd, not decay'd—
 His years are countless as the dusty race
 That people an old Cheese and flourish only
 In the unsoundest parts on't.
 The big waves shatter thy frail skiff! the winds
 Sing anything but lullabies unto thee!
 The dark-hair'd Midnight grant no ray to thee,
 But that of lightning, or the dreadful splendour
 Of the conflicting wave! the red bolt scathe thee!
 Why was I link'd with such a frowsy mate,
 With such a fusty partner of my days?

SCENE V

(Enter DEVIL)

(AMORET shrieks, covers her face with her hand and runs to the door. DEVIL brings her back and forces her into a chair.)

DEVIL Madam! What's this? What? Railing? Fie! for shame!
 (Nay, sit you still and hear me.) Think you then
 To play Xantippe with impunity,
 Who gave her philosophical old spouse
 So choice and delicate a water bath
 To whet his appetite one frosty morning
 Before his breakfast?¹ Do you hearken to me?

AMORET Ye saints defend me—I shall die with terror.

DEVIL How, now, my dainty one, my delicate ward,
 My pretty piece of frail mortality,
 Where think you is the rendezvous of Saints,
 Where their celestial club-room, that you make
 A fretwork argent of your snowy fingers,
 And cast your jetty pupils up on high
 Until the blank, unanimated white
 Usurps the field of vision?
 A most unphilosophical conclusion!

¹Xantippe, the wife of Socrates, is said to have emptied the slop-pail over him in a fit of temper.

Point thy hands downward, turn thine eyes to the floor!
 There is a Heaven beneath this Earth as fair
 As that which roofs it here.
 Dost think that Heaven is local, and not rather
 The omnipresence of the glorified
 And liberated Spirit—the expansion
 Of man's depress'd and fetter'd faculties
 Into omniscience?

AMORET
 DEVIL

O ye Powers have mercy!

Have mercy, quoth'a! When had thy tongue mercy
 Upon thy betters, mistress? Curb it straightly,
 'Tis the most dangerous member of the body—
 Unto the wise a blessing and a benefit,
 A healing balm of mild Persuasion,
 A sewer up of rents, sweet Pity's oracle,
 A curber of dissension's contumely—
 But in the mouth of the improvident
 Worse than an Adder's fang.
 It prompts the brain to hatch, the hand to execute,
 The heart to shake off conscience and the back
 To throw away the burden of restraint,
 The saucy foot to spurn Authority.
 Faith and troth, Madam, if my fates had bid me
 To tread the thorny path of life with thee,
 If the indissoluble, firm-knit chain
 Of fixed alliance in its sacred bond
 Had joined the fortune of thy stars with mine,
 Would I become a target of your taunts?
 The mark and butt of your unruly tongue?
 Would I be baffled, like the idle wave
 Fuming and fretting on a changeless rock,
 Without the power to make impression
 On the obdurate nature of the stone?
 Would I be hurried like the dust of the earth
 With every gale of passion to and fro,
 Or be the plaything of your haughtiness
 To gibe and sneer at?

AMORET

Hence! Avaunt, foul fiend!

Bear hence the terrors of thy crooked horns
 And the long windings of thy sinuous tail!
 Oh! that I could speak Latin, whose magic sounds
 And Elfin syllables might drive thee far
 To thy remotest Hell. . . .

. . . I know not whence thou comest
 Nor who thou art, nor what thy message here,
 Nor how I may exorcise thee, or drive
 Thy troubled spirit to its bidding-place.

DEVIL Thoughts! Thoughts! what thoughts are thine
But evil and dishonour?

DEVIL Out on thee, woman!
Devils are faithful to their trust.

DEVIL Dost weep?
Is that a tear which stains thy cheek? Nay—now
It quivers at the tip-end of thy nose
Which makes it somewhat dubious from which feature
It first had issue.

The rain of sentiment, the dews of feeling,
The beads of sensibility!
They are the coinage of a single wish.
I know that ye can summon them at will.
They are a woman's weapons, sword and shield,
Wherewith she braves remonstrance and breaks hearts—

AMORET I pray thee—
DEVIL Get thee to bed—yet stay—but one word more—

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AMORET (*half aside*) In all conscience
My mate is stale enough.

Do'st mutter? how?
Would you outface the devil, Insolence?
Or tweak me like St. Dunstan by the nose,
Who scarified my smeller for a twelvemonth?
Who would cast seeds i' th' ocean? who would graft
Good counsel's fruits upon a stock so sterile?
Oh! Amoret! there is no honour in thee;
Thou art the painted vision of a dream,
Whose colours fade to nothing, a fair rainbow
Mocking the tantalized sight, an airy bubble,
O'er whose bright surface fly the hues of light,
As if to hide the nothingness within.
Few will bear sounding—cast the plummet in
And it will draw up mud, vile, worthless mud.
Gaze on the mirror of the silver lake
In its clear picture deftly pencilling
The soft inversion of the tremulous woods,
But probe it not to th' bottom—weeds, rank weeds,
Darkness and swarming reptiles harbour there.
Now go and ponder on my words. Begone.

(Going to the timepiece

Half after midnight! These mute moralizers,
Pointing to the unheeding lapse of hours,
Become a tacit, eloquent reproach
Unto the dissipation of this Earth.
There is a clock in Pandemonium,
Hard by the burning throne of my Great Grandsire,
The slow vibrations of whose pendulum,
With click-clack alternation to and fro,
Sound "EVER, NEVER!" thro' the courts of Hell,
Piercing the wrung ears of the damned that writhe
Upon their beds of flame, and, whensoever
There may be short cessation of their wailings,
Through all the boundless depth of fires is heard
The shrill and solemn warning "EVER, NEVER."
Then bitterly, I throw, they turn and toss
And shriek and shout, to drown the thrilling note—

(Looking again at the timepiece)
Half after midnight! Wherefore stand I here?
Methinks my tongue runs twenty knots an hour:
I must unto mine office.

(Exit abruptly)

*written 1823
published 1930*

MARIANA

'Mariana in the moated grange.'
Measure for Measure

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, 'The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

'Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'The day is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

About a stone-cast from the wall
 A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
 And o'er it many, round and small,
 The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
 Hard by a poplar shook alway,
 All silver-green with gnarled bark:
 For leagues no other tree did mark
 The level waste, the rounding gray.
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,
 And the shrill winds were up and away,
 In the white curtain, to and fro,
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.
 But when the moon was very low,
 And wild winds bound within their cell,
 The shadow of the poplar fell
 Upon her bed, across her brow.
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

All day within the dreamy house,
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
 The blue fly sung in the pane, the mouse
 Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
 Old voices called her from without.
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound
 Which to the wooing wind aloof
 The poplar made, did all confound

Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
 When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
 Athwart the chambers, and the day
 Was sloping toward his western bower.
 Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,
 He will not come,' she said;
 She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 Oh God, that I were dead!'

THE KRAKEN¹

Below the thunders of the upper deep;
 Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
 His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
 The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee
 About his shadowy sides: above him swell
 Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;
 And far away into the sickly light,
 From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
 Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
 Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.
 'There hath he lain for ages and will lie
 Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
 Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
 Then once by man and angels to be seen,
 In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

SONG

I

A spirit haunts the year's last hours
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
 To himself he talks;
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,
 At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
 In the walks;
 Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
 Of the mouldering flowers:
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

¹A fabulous sea monster of gigantic size.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
 As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
 An hour before death;
 My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
 At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
 And the breath
 Of the fading edges of box beneath,
 And the year's last rose.
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

A CHARACTER¹

With a half-glance upon the sky
 At night he said, 'The wanderings
 Of this most intricate Universe
 Teach me the nothingness of things.'
 Yet could not all creation pierce
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty: that the dull
 Saw no divinity in grass,
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;
 Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods
 More purely, when they wish to charm
 Pallas and Juno sitting by:
 And with a sweeping of the arm,
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
 He canvass'd human mysteries,
 And trod on silk, as if the winds
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,
 And stood aloof from other minds
 In impotence of fancied power.

¹These lines refer to Sunderland, a fellow undergraduate with Tennyson at Trinity.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold:
Upon himself himself did feed:
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.
He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of this thoughts were headed
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,¹
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe² unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

¹The comparison is to darts shot through a blow pipe.

²Ancient name for Gibraltar.

JUVENILIA

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man.
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world.

SONG—THE OWL

I

When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
 And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
 And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
 Twice or thrice his roundelay,
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

MECHANOPHILUS

(In the time of the first railways)

Now first we stand and understand,
 And sunder false from true,
 And handle boldly with the hand,
 And see and shape and do.

Dash back that ocean with a pier,
 Strow yonder mountain flat,
 A railway there, a tunnel here,
 Mix me this Zone with that!

Bring me my horse—my horse? my wings
 That I may soar the sky,
 For Thought into the outward springs,
 I find her with the eye.

O will she, moonlike, sway the main,
 And bring or chase the storm,
 Who was a shadow in the brain,
 And is a living form?

Far as the Future vaults her skies,
 From this my vantage ground
 To those still-working energies
 I spy nor term nor bound.

As we surpass our father's skill,
 Our sons will shame our own;
 A thousand things are hidden still .
 And not a hundred known.

And had some prophet spoken true
 Of all we shall achieve,
 The wonders were so wildly new,
 That no man would believe.

Meanwhile, my brothers, work, and wield
The forces of to-day,
And plow the Present like a field,
And garner all you may!

You, what the cultured surface grows,
Dispense with careful hands:
Deep under deep for ever goes,
Heaven over heaven expands.

*an early poem
first published 1892*

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS¹

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND

O God! my God! have mercy now.
I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou
Didst die for me, for such as *me*,
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,
And that my sin was as a thorn
Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,
Wounding Thy soul.—That even now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumbrous summer noon
While I do pray to Thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow!
Is not my human pride brought low?
The boastings of my spirit still?
The joy I had in my freewill
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown?
And what is left to me, but Thou,
And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;
Christians with happy countenances—
And children all seem full of Thee!
And women smile with saint-like glances
Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd
Above Thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And Thou and peace to earth were born.
Goodwill to me as well as all—

¹See Introduction, page 21, for the circumstances in which this poem was written.

I one of them: my brothers they:
 Brothers in Christ—a world of peace
 And confidence, day after day;
 And trust and hope till things should cease,
 And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!
 To hold a common scorn of death!
 And at a burial to hear
 The creaking cords which wound and eat
 Into my human heart, whene'er
 Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,
 With hopeful grief, were passing sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be
 The trustful infant on the kneel
 Who lets his rosy fingers play
 About his mother's neck, and knows
 Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
 They comfort him by night and day;
 They light his little life away;
 He hath no thought of coming woes;
 He hath no care of life or death;
 Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
 Because the Spirit of happiness
 And perfect rest so inward is;
 And loveth so his innocent heart,
 Her temple and her place of birth,
 Where she would ever wish to dwell,
 Life of the fountain there, beneath
 Its salient springs, and far apart,
 Hating to wander out on earth,
 Or breathe into the hollow air,
 Whose chillness would make visible
 Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,
 Which mixing with the infant's blood,
 Fulfils him with beatitude.
 Oh! sure it is a special care
 Of God, to fortify from doubt,
 To arm in proof, and guard about
 With triple-mailed trust, and clear
 Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
 As thine, my mother, when with brows
 Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld
 In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,

For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—
 For me unworthy!—and beheld
 Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew
 The beauty and repose of faith,
 And the clear spirit shining thro'.
 Oh! wherefore do we grow awry
 From roots which strike so deep? why dare
 Paths in the desert? Could not I
 Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,
 To the earth—until the ice would melt
 Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?
 What Devil had the heart to scathe
 Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush the dew
 From thine own lily, when thy grave
 Was deep, my mother, in the clay?
 Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I
 So little love for thee? But why
 Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why pray
 To one who heeds not, who can save
 But will not? Great in faith, and strong
 Against the grief of circumstance
 Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if
 Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
 Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,
 Unpiloted i' the echoing dance
 Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
 Unto the death, not sunk! I know
 At matins and at evensong,
 That thou, if thou wert yet alive,
 In deep and daily prayers would'st strive
 To reconcile me with thy God.
 Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
 At heart, thou wouldest murmur still—
 'Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,
 My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'
 Would'st tell me I must brook the rod
 And chastisement of human pride;
 That pride, the sin of devils, stood .
 Betwixt me and the light of God!
 That hitherto I had defied
 And had rejected God—that grace
 Would drop from his o'er-brimming love,
 As manna on my wilderness,
 If I would pray—that God would move
 And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence,
 Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
 Would issue tears of penitence

Which would keep green hope's life.

Alas!

I think that pride hath now no place
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet
Anchor thy frailty there, where man
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea
At midnight, when the crisp slope waves
After a tempest, rib and fret
The broad-imbased beach, why he
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?
Wherefore his ridges are not curls
And ripples of an inland mere?
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can
Draw down into his vexed pools
All that blue heaven which hues and paves
The other? I am too forlorn,
Too shaken: my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,
The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,
When I went forth in quest of truth,
'It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length,
Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,
An image with profulgent brows,
And perfect limbs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the Ox
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
The horned valleys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills
In summer heats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,¹
And answers to his mother's calls
'From the flower'd furrow. In a time,
Of which he wots not, run short pains

¹Companion, mate. Used by Chaucer and Spenser.

Thro' his warm heart; and then, from whence
 He knows not, on his light there falls
 A shadow, and his native slope,
 Where he was wont to leap and climb,
 Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
 And something in the darkness draws
 His forehead earthward, and he dies.
 Shall man live thus, in joy and hope
 As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
 Living, but that he shall live on?
 Shall we not look into the laws
 Of life and death, and things that seem,
 And things that be, and analyse
 Our double nature, and compare
 All creeds till we have found the one,
 If one there be? Ay me! I fear
 All may not doubt, but everywhere
 Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,
 Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove
 Shadow me over, and my sins
 Be unremember'd, and Thy love
 Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet
 Somewhat before the heavy clod
 Weighs on me, and the busy fret
 Of that sharp-headed worm begins
 In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!
 O spirit and heart made desolate!
 O damned vacillating state!

THE SEA-FAIRIES

Slow sail'd the weary mariners and saw,
 Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
 To little harps of gold; and while they mused
 Whispering to each other half in fear,
 Shril music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no more.
 Whither away from the high green field, and the happy
 blossoming shore?
 Day and night to the billow the fountain calls:
 Down shower the gambolling waterfalls

From wandering over the lea:
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells
 They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
 And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
 High over the full-toned sea:
 O hither, come hither and furl your sails,
 Come hither to me and to me:
 Hither, come hither and frolic and play;
 Here it is only the mew that wails;
 We will sing to you all the day:
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
 For here are the blissful downs and dales,
 And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
 And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
 And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
 Over the islands free;
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;
 Hither, come hither and see;
 And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning wave,
 And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,
 And sweet shall your welcome be:
 O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
 For merry brides are we:
 We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words:
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 With pleasure and love and jubilee:
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords
 Runs up the ridged sea.
 Who can light on as happy a shore
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er?
 Whither away? listen and stay: mariner, mariner, fly
 no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE¹

I

Life and Thought have gone away
 Side by side,
 Leaving door and windows wide:
 Careless tenants they!

2

All within is dark as night:
 In the windows is no light;

¹*The Deserted House* is the dead body from which life and thought have fled to a higher existence.

And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

3

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

4

Come away: no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

5

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us!

THE DYING SWAN¹

1

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

2

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;

¹There is a legend that the swan when dying utters, for the first and only time, a marvellous song.

Above in the wind was the swallow,
 Chasing itself at its own wild will,
 And far thro' the marish green and still
 The tangled water-courses slept,
 Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

3

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
 Of that waste place with joy
 Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
 The warble was low, and full and clear;
 And floating about the under-sky,
 Prevailing in weakness, the coronach¹ stole
 Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;
 But anon her awful jubilant voice,
 With a music strange and manifold,
 Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;
 As when a mighty people rejoice
 With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of
 gold,
 And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
 Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
 To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.
 And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
 And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
 And the wavy swell of the souging reeds,
 And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
 And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
 The desolate creeks and pools among,
 Were flooded over with eddying song.

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

My heart is wasted with my woe,
 Oriana,
 There is no fest for me below,
 Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow,
 And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,
 Oriana,
 Alone I wander to and fro,
 Oriana.

¹Gaelic funeral dirge or lamentation.

Ere the light on dark was growing,
 Oriana,
 At midnight the cock was crowing,
 Oriana:
 Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
 We heard the steeds to battle going,
 Oriana;
 Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
 Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,
 Oriana,
 Ere I rode into the fight,
 Oriana,
 While blissful tears blinded my sight
 By star-shine and by moonlight,
 Oriana,
 I to thee my troth did plight,
 Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
 Oriana:
 She watch'd my crest among them all,
 Oriana:
 She saw me fight, she heard me call,
 When forth there stept a foeman tall,
 Oriana,
 Atween me and the castle wall,
 Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
 Oriana:
 The false, false arrow went aside,
 Oriana:
 The damned arrow glanced aside,
 And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,
 Oriana!
 Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
 Oriana!

Oh! narrow, narrow was the space,
 Oriana.
 Loud, loud, rang out the bugle's brays,
 Oriana.
 Oh! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
 The battle deepen'd in its place,
 Oriana;
 But I was down upon my face,
 Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
Oriana!

How could I rise and come away,
Oriana?

How could I look upon the day?
They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
Oriana—

They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana!

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana!

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my cheek,
Oriana:

What wantest thou? whom dost thou seek,
Oriana?

I cry aloud: none hear my cries,
Oriana.

Thou comest atween me and the skies,
Oriana.

I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.

Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

O cursed hand! O cursed blow!
Oriana!

O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana!

All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,
Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,
Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
I dare not die and come to thee,
Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,
Oriana.

L I S E T T E

My light Lisette
Is grave and shrewd,
And half a prude,
And half coquette,
So staid and set,
So terse and trim,
So arch and prim
Is my Lisette.

A something settled and precise
Hath made a home in both the eyes
Of my Lisette,
Lives in the little wilful hands,
The little foot that glides and flits,
Braced with dark silken sandal-bands,
Even in the coxcomb parrokette
That on the drooping shoulder sits
Of trim Lisette.

The measured motion of the blood;
The words, where each one tells,
Too logical for womanhood,
Brief changes rung on silver bells;
The cheek with health's close kisses warm,
The finished form so light;
Such fullness in a little form
As satisfies the sight;
The bodice fitted so exact
The nutbrown tress so crisply curled,
And the whole woman so compact,
Her match is nowhere in the world;
Such knowledge of the modes of life,
And household order such,
As might create a perfect wife,
Not careful overmuch;
All these so moved me
When we met,
I would she loved me,
Trim Lisette.

What if to-morrow morn I go,
And in an accent clipt and clear
Say some three words within her ear,
I think she would not answer "No."

Put by the ribbon in her hair,
 And those untasted lips, I swear,
 I keep some little doubt as yet;
 With such an eye
 So grave and sly
 Looks my Lisette.
 What words may show
 The "Yes"—the "No"—
 Of trim Lisette?
 The doubt is less,
 Since last we met,
 Let it be "Yes"
 My sweet Lisette.

*a very early poem
 first published 1931*

HOME¹

What shall sever me
 From the love of home?
 Shall the weary sea
 Leagues of sounding foam?
 Shall extreme distress,
 Shall unknown disgrace,
 Make my love the less
 For my sweet birth-place?
 Tho' my brains grow dry,
 Fancy mew her wings,
 And my memory
 Forget all other things—
 Tho' I could not tell
 My left hand from my right—
 I should know thee well,
 Home of my delight!

*an early poem
 first published 1907*

¹This poem was written when Tennyson was leaving Somersby for Cambridge in 1827.

Poems of 1832 and 1833

These poems date from the last two years before the death of Arthur Hallam. Except where otherwise stated they were first published in *Poems* by Alfred Tennyson, 1833, really issued in December, 1832. (See Introduction, page 24.)

They are printed here in the revised versions included in the first of Tennyson's two volumes of 1842. (See Introduction, page 29.) I have included five poems, *St. Agnes' Eve*, *Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*, *Sir Galahad*, *St. Simeon Stylites* and *The Vision of Sin* which were not published till 1842. These were written (or mainly written) before the end of 1833.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT¹

Part 1

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot:

¹This poem is founded on an old Italian novelette called *La Dama di Scalotta*. A version is told by Malory in his *Morte D'Arthur* (Bk. 18, ch. 9-20) concerning the daughter of the Knight of Astolat and is retold by Tennyson in *The Idylls of the King* as *Lancelot and Elaine*. In the old romances Astolat was sometimes called Ascolat or Escalot. Tennyson no doubt changed the name to Shalott as being more pleasant in sound than Scalott.

And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers ' 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott.'

Part 2

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights,
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

Part 3

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,
 The sun came dazling thro' the leaves,
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
 A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
 Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.
 The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot:
 And from his blazon'd baldric slung
 A mighty silver bugle hung,
 And as he rode his armour rung,
 Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burn'd like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 As often thro' the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
 From underneath his helmet flow'd
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 From the bank and from the river
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
 "Tirra lirra," by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
 She made three paces thro' the room,
 She saw the water-lily bloom,
 She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide;
 The mirror crack'd from side to side;
 "The curse is come upon me," cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

Part 4

In the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale yellow woods were waning,
 The broad stream in his banks complaining,
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot;
 Down she came and found a boat
 Beneath a willow left afloat,
 And round about the prow she wrote
 The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
 Like some bold seer in a trance,
 Seeing all his own mischance—
 With a glassy countenance
 Did she look to Camelot.
 And at the closing of the day
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
 The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
 That loosely flew to left and right—
 The leaves upon her falling light—
 Thro' the noises of the night
 She floated down to Camelot:
 And as the boat-head wound along
 The willowy hills and fields among,
 They heard her singing her last song,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
 Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
 Till her blood was frozen slowly,
 And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
 Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
 For ere she reach'd upon the tide
 The first house by the water-side,
 Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
 By garden-wall and gallery,
 A gleaming shape she floated by,
 Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.
 Out upon the wharfs they came,
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
 And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
 And in the lighted palace near
 Died the sound of royal cheer;
 And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot:
 But Lancelot mused a little space;
 He said, 'She has a lovely face;
 God in his mercy lend her grace.
 The Lady of Shalott.'

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH¹

With one black shadow at its feet,
 The house thro' all the level shines,
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
 And silent in its dusty vines:
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
 An empty river-bed before,
 And shallows on a distant shore,
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.
 But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,
 And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,
 And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,
 From brow and bosom slowly down
 Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
 Her streaming curls of deepest brown
 To left and right, and made appear
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
 Her melancholy eyes divine,
 The home of woe without a tear.

¹This poem is a pendant to *Mariana* (see page 62), and shows the strong impression made on Tennyson's imagination by his journey to the Pyrenees in 1830.

And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,
 'Madonna, sad is night and morn,'
 And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,
 Low on her knees herself she cast,
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
 Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace
 To help me of my weary load.'
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd
 The clear perfection of her face.
 'Is this the form,' she made her moan,
 'That won his praises night and morn?'
 And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake alone,
 I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
 Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
 But day increased from heat to heat,
 On stony drought and steaming salt;
 Till now at noon she slept again,
 And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,
 And heard her native breezes pass,
 And runlets babbling down the glen.
 She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
 And murmuring, as at night and morn,
 She thought, 'My spirit is here alone,
 Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:
 She felt he was and was not there.
 She woke: the babble of the stream
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare
 Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
 The river-bed was dusty-white;
 And all the furnace of the light
 Struck up against the blinding wall.
 She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
 More inward than at night or morn,
 'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
 Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,
 For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be true,
 To what is loveliest upon earth.'

An image seem'd to pass the door,
 To look at her with slight, and say
 'But now thy beauty flows away,
 So be alone for evermore.'
 'O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,
 'And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
 Is this the end to be left alone
 To live forgotten, and die forlorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day
 An image seem'd to pass the door,
 To look into her eyes and say,
 'But thou shalt be alone no more.'
 And flaming downward over all
 From heat to heat the day decreased,
 And slowly rounded to the east
 The one black shadow from the wall.
 'The day to night,' she made her moan,
 'The day to night, the night to morn,
 And day and night I am left alone
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,
 There came a sound as of the sea;
 Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
 And lean'd upon the balcony.
 There all in spaces rosy-bright
 Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
 And deepening thro' the silent spheres
 Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
 And weeping then she made her moan,
 'The night comes on that knows not morn,
 When I shall cease to be all alone,
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I see the wealthy miller yet,
 His double chin, his portly size,
 And who that knew him could forget
 The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
 The slow wise smile that, round about
 His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
 Seem'd half-within and half-without,
 And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
 Three fingers round the old silver cup—
 I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
 At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
 With summer lightnings of a soul
 So full of summer warmth, so glad,
 So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
 His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
 My own sweet Alice, we must die.
 There's somewhat in this world amiss
 Shall be unriddled by and by.
 There's somewhat flows to us in life,
 But more is taken quite away.
 Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
 That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
 I least should breathe a thought of pain.
 Would God renew me from my birth
 I'd almost live my life again.
 So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
 And once again to woo thee mine—
 It seems in after-dinner talk
 Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy
 Late-left an orphan of the squire,
 Where this old mansion mounted high
 Looks down upon the village spire:
 For even here, where I and you
 Have lived and loved alone so long,
 Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
 By some wild 'skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
 In firry woodlands making moan;
 But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
 I had no motion of my own.
 For scarce my life with fancy play'd
 Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—
 Still hither thither idly sway'd
 Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
 The milldam rushing down with noise,
 And see the minnows everywhere
 In crystal eddies glance and poise,
 The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
 Below the range of stepping-stones,
 Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
 In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
 When after roving in the woods
 ('Twas April then), I came and sat
 Below the chestnuts, when their buds
 Were glistening to the breezy blue;
 And on the slope, an absent fool,
 I cast me down, nor thought of you,
 But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
 An echo from a measured strain,
 Beat time to nothing in my head
 From some odd corner of the brain.
 It haunted me, the morning long,
 With weary sameness in the rhymes,
 The phantom of a silent song,
 That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
 I watch'd the little circles die;
 They past into the level flood,
 And there a vision caught my eye;
 The reflex of a beauteous form,
 A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
 As when a sunbeam wavers warm
 Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
 That morning, on the casement-edge
 A long green box of mignonette,
 And you were leaning from the ledge
 And when I raised my eyes, above
 They met with two so full and bright—
 Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
 That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
 That I should die an early death:
 For love possess'd the atmosphere,
 And fill'd the breast with purer breath.
 My mother thought, What ails the boy?
 For I was alter'd, and began
 To move about the house with joy,
 And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
 Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
 The sleepy pool above the dam,
 The pool beneath it never still,
 The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
 The dark round of the dripping wheel,
 The very air about the door
 Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
 When April nights began to blow,
 And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
 I saw the village lights below;
 I knew your taper far away,
 And full at heart of trembling hope,
 From off the wold I came, and lay
 Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;
 And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she sits!'
 The white chalk-quarry from the hill
 Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
 'O that I were beside her now!
 O will she answer if I call?
 O would she give me vow for vow,
 Sweet Alice, if I told her all?'

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;
 And, in the pauses of the wind,
 Sometimes I heard you sing within;
 Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.
 At last you rose and moved the light,
 And the long shadow of the chair
 Flitted across into the night,
 And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
 The lanes, you know, were white with may,
 Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
 Flush'd like the coming of the day;
 And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
 You would, and would not, little one!
 Although I pleaded tenderly,
 And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
 To yield consent to my desire:
 She wish'd me happy, but she thought
 I might have look'd a little higher;
 And I was young—too young to wed:
 'Yet must I love her for your sake;
 Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:
 Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
 But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
 This dress and that by turns you tried,
 Too fearful that you should not please.
 I loved you better for your fears,
 I knew you could not look but well;
 And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,
 I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
 The doubt my mother would not see;
 She spoke at large of many things,
 And at the last she spoke of me;
 And turning look'd upon your face,
 As near the door you sat apart,
 And rose, and, with a silent grace
 Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
 I gave you, Alice, on the day
 When, arm in arm, we went along,
 A pensive pair, and you were gay
 With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
 As in the nights of old, to lie
 Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
 While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,
 And she is grown so dear, so dear,
 That I would be the jewel
 That trembles in her ear:
 For hid in ringlets day and night,
 I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
 About her dainty dainty waist,
 And her heart would beat against me,
 In sorrow and in rest:
 And I should know if it beat right,
 I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
 And all day long to fall and rise¹
 Upon her balmy bosom,
 With her laughter or her sighs,
 And I would lie so light, so light,
 I scarce should be unclasped at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—
 True love interprets—right alone.
 His light upon the letter dwells,
 For all the spirit is his own.
 So, if I waste words now, in truth
 You must blame Love. His early rage
 Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
 And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
 Like mine own life to me thou art,
 Where Past and Present, wound in one,
 Do make a garland for the heart:
 So sing that other song I made,
 Half-anger'd with my happy lot,
 The day, when in the chestnut shade
 I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
 Can he pass, and we forget?
 Many suns arise and set.
 Many a chance the years beget.
 Love the gift is Love the debt.
 Even so.

¹This line is obscure. Some think that *long* is a verb and that the sense is *and I long all day to rise and fall*; others that *to* is superfluous and the sense *I would rise and fall all day long*. If the latter is right, it is odd that Tennyson, who was so careful a critic of his work, should have allowed an ungrammatical phrase to stand unaltered for sixty years. Nevertheless I prefer this interpretation which seems less awkward than the other.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget:
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine!
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes for ever dwell!
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since I first knew them well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss had brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee:
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds;
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below:
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA

O Love, Love, Love! O withering might!
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
 Lo, falling from my constant mind,
 Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers:
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers:
I roll'd among the tender flowers:
 I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth:
 I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
 O Love, O fire! once he drew
 With one long kiss my whole soul thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly: from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
 In my dry brain my spirit soon,
 Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire:
 And, isled in sudden seas of light,
 My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eyes:
I *will* possess him or will die.

I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking in his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

ROSALIND

I

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
Whose free delight, from any height of rapid flight,
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,
Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up and down the streaming wind?

2

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd strains,
The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightning flash atween the rains,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.
You care not for another's pains,
Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,
And flashes off a thousand ways,
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me thro' with pointed light;
But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

3

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind:

Too long you keep the upper skies;
 Too long you roam and wheel at will;
 But we must hood your random eyes,
 That care not whom they kill,
 And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
 Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
 Some red heath-flower in the dew,
 Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind
 And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
 Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
 And clip your wings, and make you love:
 When we have lured you from above,
 And that delight of frolic flight, by day or night,
 From North to South,
 We'll bind you fast in silken cords,
 And kiss away the bitter words
 From off your rosy mouth.

KATE

I know her by her angry air,
 Her bright black eyes, her bright black hair,
 Her rapid laughter wild and shrill,
 As laughter of the woodpecker
 From the bosom of a hill.
 'Tis Kate—she sayeth what she will:
 For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,
 Clear as the twanging of a harp.
 Her heart is like a throbbing star.
 Kate hath a spirit ever strung
 Like a new bow, and bright and sharp
 As edges of the scymetar.
 Whence shall she take a fitting mate?
 For Kate no common love will feel;
 My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,
 As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith 'the world is void of might.'
 Kate saith 'the men are gilded flies.'
 Kate snaps her fingers at my vows;
 Kate will not hear of lovers' sighs.
 I would I were an arméd knight,
 Far-famed for well-won enterprise,
 And wearing on my swarthy brows
 The garland of new-wreathed emprise:
 For in a moment I would pierce

The blackest files of clanging fight,
And strongly strike to left and right,
In dreaming of my lady's eyes.
Oh! Kate loves well the bold and fierce;
But none are bold enough for Kate
She cannot find a fitting mate.

TO —¹

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I send you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

¹These introductory lines were addressed to Tennyson's Cambridge friend, R. C. Trench, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, who had said to him "Tennyson, we cannot live in Art". *The Palace of Art* emphasizes the danger of a too intense pursuit of Knowledge (Science) or Art unless it is controlled by a moral purpose and spiritual faith. (See Introduction, page 24.)

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
 The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
 My soul would live alone unto herself
 In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and round,' I said,
 'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
 Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade
 Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily:
 'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
 In this great mansion, that is built for me,
 So royal-rich and wide.'

• • • •

Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,
 In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
 The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
 A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
 Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
 Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
 Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
 That lent broad verge to distant lands,
 Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
 Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
 Across the mountain stream'd below
 In mighty folds, that floating as they fell
 Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
 A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd
 From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, 'And who shall gaze upon
 My palace with unblinded eyes,
 While this great bow will waver in the sun,
 And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light ærial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadow'd grotts of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

• • • •

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.¹

¹The underside of the olive leaf is grey, and shows when turned up by the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones and slags,
 Beyond, a line of heights, and higher,
 All barr'd with long white cloud, the scornful crags,
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd
 On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
 Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
 A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
 As fit for every mood of mind,
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there
 Not less than truth design'd.

• • • •

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
 Beneath branch-work of costly sardonix
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
 Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
 Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
 An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
 A group of Houris bow'd to see
 The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
 That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son¹
 In some fair space of sloping greens
 Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
 And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
 To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
 The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear
 Of wisdom and of law.²

¹This line refers to King Arthur, *cf. Morte d'Arthur*, page 228.

²It was said that Numa Pompilius, a legendary King of ancient Rome, married the nymph Egeria. He used to visit her by night in her sacred grove outside the city, and there she instructed him how to govern his Kingdom. *Ausonia* was an ancient name for Italy.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,¹
 And many a tract of palm and rice,
 The throne of Indian Cama² slowly sail'd
 A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
 From off her shoulder backward borne:
 From one hand droop'd a crocus: one hand grasp'd
 The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
 Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
 Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
 Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair
 Which the supreme Caucasian³ mind
 Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
 Not less than life, design'd.

• • •

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
 Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
 And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
 The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
 Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
 And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,
 And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;⁴
 A million wrinkles carved his skin;
 A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
 From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
 Many an arch high up did lift,
 And angels rising and descending met
 With interchange of gift.

¹*Engrail'd* is a heraldic term meaning 'jagged'.

²Hindu God of Love, the son of Brahma.

³The races which have peopled Europe were supposed to have originated in the Caucasus.

⁴Homer.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
 With cycles of the human tale
 Of this wide world, the times of every land
 So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
 Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings;
 Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
 The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
 All force in bonds that might endure,
 And here once more like some sick man declined,
 And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and those great bells
 Began to chime. She took her throne:
 She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
 To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured flame
 Two godlike faces gazed below;
 Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
 The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were
 Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
 Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
 In diverse raiment strange:

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
 Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,
 And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,¹ drew
 Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
 Her low preamble all alone,
 More than my soul to hear her echo'd song
 Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
 Joying to feel herself alive,
 Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
 Lord of the senses five;

¹A mythical Ethiopian hero whose name became associated with the Statues of Amenholep III near Thebes in Egypt. After these were damaged by an earthquake (B.C. 27) one of them, when touched by the morning sun, used to give forth harplike notes. This went on until the statue was restored in A.D. 170.

Communing with herself: 'All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me.' She—when young night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,
'I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;
And at the last she said:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.'

* * * *

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so three years
 She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell,
 Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
 Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
 God, before whom ever lie bare
 The abysmal deeps of Personality,
 Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight
 The airy hand confusion wrought,
 Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite
 The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
 Fell on her, from which mood was born
 Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
 Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What! is not this my place of strength,' she said,
 'My spacious mansion built for me,
 Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
 Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood
 Uncertain shapes; and unawares
 On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
 And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
 And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
 On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
 That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
 Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
 'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
 Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,
 Left on the shore; that hears all night
 The plunging seas draw backward from the land
 Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone hall,
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world:
One deep, deep silence all'

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,
Inwraught tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, 'I have found
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,
 She threw her royal robes away.
 'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,
 'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
 So lightly, beautifully built:
 Perchance I may return with others there
 When I have purged my guilt.'

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I read, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
 '*The Legend of Good Women*,' long ago
 Sung by the morning star of song, who made
 His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
 Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth
 With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
 Held me above the subject, as strong gales
 Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,
 Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
 I saw, wherever light illumineth,
 Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
 The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
 Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
 And I heard sounds of insult, shame and wrong,
 And trumpets blown for wars;

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs;
 And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries;
 And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs
 Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold; heroes tall
 Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
 Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall;
 Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire;
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far
In an old wood: fresh-wash'd in coolest dew
The maiden splendours of the morning star
Shook in the stedfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
 Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
 Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
 Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd
 Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
 And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd
 The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
 The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
 On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in dew,
 Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
 Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame
 The times when I remember to have been
 Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone
 Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime,
 'Pass freely thro': the wood is all thine own,
 Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,
 Stillter than chisell'd marble, standing there;
 A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
 And most divinely fair.¹

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
 Froze my swift speech: she turning on my face
 The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
 Spoke slowly in her place.

'I had great beauty: ask thou not my name:
 No one can be more wise than destiny.
 Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
 I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field
 Myself for such a face had boldly died,'
 I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd
 To one that stood beside.²

¹Helen of Troy was the daughter of Zeus by the mortal woman Leda.

²Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon. She was sacrificed by her father to propitiate the goddess Artemis, who was holding up the Greek fleet on its way to Troy.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
 To her full height her stately stature draws;
 'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with a curse:
 This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
 Which men call'd Aulis in those iron years:
 My father held his hand upon his face;
 I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs
 As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
 The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
 Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;
 The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore;
 The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat;
 Touch'd; and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward brow:
 'I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
 Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,
 Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,
 As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:
 Sudden I heard a voice that cried, 'Come here,
 That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
 One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd;
 A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,¹
 Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:
 'I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd
 All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.
 Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood
 According to my humour ebb and flow.
 I have no men to govern in this wood:
 That makes my only woe.

¹Cleopatra.

'Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend
 One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
 That dull cold-blooded Caesar. Prythee, friend,
 Where is Mark Anthony?

'The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime
 On Fortune's neck: we sat as God by God:
 The Nilus would have risen before his time
 And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit
 Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus.¹ O my life
 In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,
 The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,
 My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
 My mailed Bacchus lept into my arms,
 Contented there to die!

'And there he died; and when I heard my name
 Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook my fear
 Of the other: with a worm I balk'd his fame.
 What else was left? look here!

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
 The polish'd argent of her breast to sight
 Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
 Showing the aspick's bite.)

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
 Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
 A name for ever!—lying robed and crown'd,
 Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
 Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
 From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change
 Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;
 Because with sudden motion from the ground
 She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light
 The interval of sound.

¹The second brightest star in the sky, part of the constellation Carina.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,¹
And singing clearer than the crested bird
That claps his wings at dawn.

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine:
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth: 'Heaven heads the count of
crimes
With that wild oath.' She render'd answer high:
'Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

¹The daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite who lost her life through her father's vow, that if he was successful in his war against the Ammonites, he would sacrifice whatever came first out of his house to meet him on his return. (See Judges, ch. 11.)

'Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
 Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
 Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to fruit
 Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father—these did move
 Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,
 Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love
 Down to a silent grave.

'And I went mourning, "No fair Hebrew boy
 Shall smile away my maiden blame among
 The Hebrew mothers"—emptied of all joy,
 Leaving the dance and song,

'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
 Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
 The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
 Beneath the battled tower.

'The light white cloud swam over us, Anon
 We heard the lion roaring from his den;
 We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
 Or, from the darken'd glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
 And thunder on the everlasting hills.
 I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
 A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,
 Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.
 How beautiful a thing it was to die
 For God and for my sire!

'It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
 That I subdued me to my father's will;
 Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
 Sweetens the spirit still.

'Moreover it is written that my race
 Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
 On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her face
 Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips: she left me where I stood:
'Glory to God,' she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Towards the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of care,
Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn and look on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!
O me, that I should ever see the light!
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:
To whom the Egyptian: O, you tamely died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's¹ waist, and thrust
The dagger thro' her side.'

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance
Her murder'd father's head,² or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanguish Death,³
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

¹The wife of Antony. Cleopatra declares that Rosamond should have stabbed Eleanor, as she would have stabbed Fulvia in a similar situation.

²Margaret Roper, Sir Thomas More's daughter, bought his head after his execution and had it buried with her when she died nine years later.

³Eleanor, Queen of Edward I who sucked the poison from his wound.

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be exprest
By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

TO J.S.¹

The wind, that beats the mountain, blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,
Fall into shadow, soonest lost:
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!
In grief I am not all unlearn'd;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass;
One went, who never hath return'd.

¹This poem was addressed to James Spedding of Mirchouse, Cumberland, on the death of his brother Edward. The fifth stanza refers to the death of Tennyson's father in 1831.

He will not smile—not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother: his mute dust
I honour and his living worth:
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I:
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,
I will not even preach to you,
'Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her will
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, 'God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind;'
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
 How *should* I soothe you anyway,
 Who miss the brother of your youth?
 Yet something I did wish to say:

For he too was a friend to me:
 Both are my friends, and my true breast
 Bleedeth for both; yet it may be
 That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make
 Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease
 Although myself could almost take
 The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace:
 Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
 While the stars burn, the moons increase,
 And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
 Nothing comes to thee new or strange.
 Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
 Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.¹

ST. AGNES' EVE

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
 Are sparkling to the moon:
 My breath to heaven like vapour goes:
 May my soul follow soon!
 The shadows of the convent-towers
 Slant down the snowy sward,
 Still creeping with the creeping hours
 That lead me to my Lord:
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
 As are the frosty skies,
 Or this first snowdrop of the year
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
 To yonder shining ground;
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,
 To yonder argent round;

¹'Secure of change' means 'secured from' or 'protected from' change.

So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within,
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride!

1842

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

A Fragment

Like souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapour everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong:

By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
 Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
 Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
 With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring:
 A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
 Buckled with golden clasps before;
 A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
 Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
 Now by some tinkling rivulet,
 In mosses mixt with violet
 Her cream-white mule his pastern set:
 And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains
 Than she whose elfin prancer springs
 By night to eery warblings,
 When all the glimmering moorland rings
 With jingling bridle-reins.

As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,
 The happy winds upon her play'd,
 Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
 She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,
 A man had given all other bliss,
 And all his worldly worth for this,
 To waste his whole heart in one kiss
 Upon her perfect lips.

1842

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,
 My strength is as the strength of ten,
 Because my heart is pure.
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
 The horse and rider reel:
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
 And when the tide of combat stands,
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
 On whom their favours fall!
 For them I battle till the end,
 To save from shame and thrall:
 But all my heart is drawn above,
 My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
 I never felt the kiss of love,
 Nor maiden's hand in mine.
 More bounteous aspects on me beam,
 Me mightier transports move and thrill;
 So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
 A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
 A light before me swims,
 Between dark stems the forest glows,
 I hear a noise of hymns:
 Then by some secret shrine I ride;
 I hear a voice but none are there;
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
 I find a magic bark;
 I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
 I float till all is dark.
 A gentle sound, an awful light!
 Three angels bear the holy Grail:
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
 Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
 The streets are dumb with snow.
 The tempest crackles on the leads,
 And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
 And gilds the driving hail.

I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
'O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near.'

So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

1842

ST. SIMEON STYLITES¹

Altho' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.

¹A Syrian anchorite, who, at the beginning of the fifth century A.D., in order to mortify the flesh, lived for 30 years on the top of a column, which was successively raised from the height of 9 feet to that of 60 feet from the ground. (See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. 4, ch. 37.)

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
 In coughs, aches, stiches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow;
 And I had hoped that ere this period closed
 Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,
 Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
 The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,
 Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd
 My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord.

Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
 For I was strong and hale of body then;
 And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,
 Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
 I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
 An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
 Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;
 I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,
 So that I scarce can hear the people hum
 About the column's base, and almost blind,
 And scarce can recognise the fields I know;
 And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;
 Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,
 While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
 Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
 Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
 Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
 Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?
 Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.
 For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
 For either they were stoned, or crucified,
 Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn
 In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here
 To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
 Bear witness, if I could have found a way

(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore: but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live:
And they say then that I work'd miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.
Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and say,
'Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast suffer'd long
For ages and for ages!' then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,

Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:
O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin:
'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,
That here come those that worship me? Ha! ha!
They think that I am somewhat. What am I?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers:
And I, in truth, (thou wilt bear witness here)
Have all in all endured as much, and more
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what of that?
It may be, no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what of that?
Yet do not rise; for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?
I think you know I have some power with Heaven
From my long penance: let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.
They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark! they shout
'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,

God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved;
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, 'Behold a saint!'
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,

I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites among men; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve,
Abaddon¹ and Asmodeus² caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again.
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest:
They flapp'd my light out as I read: I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book;
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise:
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come—yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors

¹According to Revelations, ch. 9, v. 2, *Abaddon* is the Hebrew name for Apollyon, Prince of the Underworld.

²King of Demons, according to Hebrew tradition.

When you may worship me without reproach;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come.
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!
'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the crown!
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,

Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

1842

THE VISION OF SIN

I had a vision when the night was late:
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise:
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,

Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

2

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Wov'n in circles: they that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;
Then the music touch'd the gates and died;
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throb'd and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round:
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew:
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

3

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn:
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded: and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and slowly drawing near,
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,

Came floating on for many a month and year,
 Unheeded: and I thought I would have spoken,
 And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late:
 But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
 When that cold vapour touch'd the palace gate,
 And link'd again. I saw within my head
 A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,
 Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
 And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

4

'Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
 Here is custom come your way;
 Take my brute and lead him in,
 Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

'Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
 See that sheets are on my bed;
 What! the flower of life is past:
 It is long before you wed.

'Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
 At the Dragon on the heath!
 Let us have a quiet hour,
 Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

'I am old, but let me drink;
 Bring me spices, bring me wine:
 I remember, when I think,
 That my youth was half divine.

'Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
 When a blanket wraps the day,
 When the rotten woodland drips,
 And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

'Sit thee down, and have no shame,
 Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee:
 What care I for any name?
 What for order or degree?

'Let me screw thee up a peg:
 Let me loose thy tongue with wine;
 Callest thou that thing a leg?
 Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

'Thou shalt not be saved by works:
Thou hast been a sinner too:
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded by the hands of fools.

'Friendship!—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

'Virtue!—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbour's wife.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave:
They are fill'd with idle spleen;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applaudive breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house:
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

'Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect State:
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

'Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes. .

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue;
Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
Savours well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads:
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

'You are bones, and what of that?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip:
All the more I do admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo! God's likeness—the ground-plan—
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed:
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near:
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
 When the locks are crisp and curl'd;
 Unto me my maudlin gall
 And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
 Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
 Dregs of life, and lees of man:
 Yet we will not die forlorn.'

5

The voice grew faint: there came a further change:
 Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range:
 Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
 And slowly quickening into lower forms;
 By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
 Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.
 Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was a crime
 Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.'
 Another said: 'The crime of sense became
 The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'
 And one: 'He had not wholly quench'd his power;
 A little grain of conscience made him sour.'
 At last I heard a voice upon the slope
 Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'
 To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
 But in a tongue no man could understand;
 And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

1842

Poems on Classical Subjects

"ILION, ILION"¹

Ilion, Ilion, dréamy Ilion, pſllared Ilion, hóly Ilion,
Cíty of Ilion wén wilt thóu be mélody bórn?
Blúe Scamándér, yéllowing Símois from the héart of
 píny Ida
Everwhírling from the mólten snóws upon the
 móuntainthrone,
Róll Scamándér, rípple Símois, ever ónward to a
 mélody
Manycírcled, overflówing, thóro' and thóro' the
 flówery lével of únbuilt Ilion,
Cíty of Ilion, pſllared Ilion, shádwyy Ilion, hóly
 Ilion,
 To a músic mérrily flówing, mérrily échoing
 Wén wilt thóu be mélody bórn?

Manygáted, heavywálled, manytówered cíty of Ilion,
From the sílver, lilyflówering meadowlével
 Wén wilt thóu be mélody bórn?
Rípple ónward, échoing Símois,
Rípple éver with a mélancholy móaning,
 In the rúshes to the dárk blue brímmed Ocean,
 yéllowing Símois,
To a músic from the gólden twániging harpwíre
 héavily dráwn.
 Manygáted, heavywálled, manytówered cíty of
 Ilion,
 To a músic sádlly flówing, slówly fálling,
 Wén wilt thóu be mélody bórn?

probably before 1830

¹According to a Greek legend the God Apollo caused the walls of Ilion (Troy) to rise by playing on his magic harp. The town was situated in the angle made by the junction of the River Scamander with its tributary Simois. The poem is written in irregular lines without any fixed metrical scheme. If it is read with the accent on the syllables indicated in the text it will be found to have a very effective rhythm.

THE HESPERIDES¹

Hesperus and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.

Comus

The North wind fall'n, in the new-starréd night
Zidonian Hanno, wandering beyond
The hoary promontory of Soloë,
Past Thymiaterion in calméd bays
Between the southern and the western Horn,
Heard neither warbling of the nightingale,
Nor melody o' the Libyan Lotus-flute
Blown seaward from the shore; but from a slope
'That ran bloom-bright into the Atlantic blue,
Beneath a highland leaning down a weight
Of cliffs, and zoned below with cedar-shade,
Came voices like the voices in a dream
Continuous; till he reach'd the outer sea:—

SONG OF THE THREE SISTERS

I

The Golden Apple, the Golden Apple, the hallow'd fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charméd root.
Round about all is mute,
As the snowfield on the mountain-peaks,
As the sandfield at the mountain-foot.
Crocodiles in briny creeks
Sleep and stir not: all is mute.
If ye sing not, if ye make false measure,
We shall lose eternal pleasure,
Worth eternal want of rest.
Laugh not loudly: watch the treasure
Of the wisdom of the West.
In a corner wisdom whispers. Five and three
(Let it not be preach'd abroad) make an awful mystery:
For the blossom unto threefold music bloweth;
Evermore it is born anew,
And the sap to threefold music floweth,

¹Three magic maidens who with the dragon Ladon guarded the golden apple given by the Earth to Herè when she married Zeus.

From the root,
 Drawn in the dark,
 Up to the fruit,
 Creeping under the fragrant bark,
 Liquid gold, honeysweet thro' and thro'. (*slow movement*)
 Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,
 Looking warily
 Every way,
 Guard the apple night and day,
 Lest one from the East come and take it away.

2

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch, ever and aye,
 Looking under silver hair with a silver eye.
 Father, twinkle not thy steadfast sight:
 Kingdoms lapse, and climates change, and races die;
 Honour comes with mystery;
 Hoarded wisdom brings delight.
 Number, tell them over, and number
 How many the mystic fruit-tree holds,
 Lest the red-comb'd dragon slumber
 Roll'd together in purple folds.
 Look to him, father, lest he wink, and the golden apple he
 stol'n away,
 For his ancient heart is drunk with overwatchings night and day
 Round about the hallow'd fruit-tree curl'd—
 Sing away, sing aloud evermore in the wind without stop,
 Lest his scaled eyelid drop,
 For he is older than the world.
 If *hé* waken, *wé* waken,
 Rapidly levelling eager eyes.
 If *hé* sleep, *wé* sleep,
 Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.
 If the golden apple be taken
 The world will be overwise.
 Five links, a golden chain are we,
 Hesper, the Dragon, and Sisters Three,
 Bound about the golden tree.

3

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch, night and day,
 Lest the old wound of the world be healéd,
 The glory unsealéd,
 The golden apple stol'n away
 And the ancient secret revealéd.
 Look from West to East along;
 Father, old Himala weakens, Caucasus¹ is bold and strong.

¹See note 3 on page 103.

Wandering waters unto wandering waters call;
 Let them clash together, foam and fall.
 Out of watchings, out of wiles,
 Comes the bliss of secret smiles.
 All things are not told to all,
 Half-round the mantling night is drawn.
 Purplefringed with even and dawn
 Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hateth morn.

4

Every flower and every fruit the redolent breath
 Of the warm seawind ripeneth,
 Arching the billow in his sleep:
 But the land-wind wandereth,
 Broken by the highland steep,
 Two streams upon the violet deep.
 For the Western Sun, and the Western Star,
 And the low west-wind, breathing afar,
 The end of day and beginning of night
 Make the apple holy and bright;
 Holy and Bright, round and full, bright and blest,
 Mellow'd in a land of rest;
 Watch it warily day and night;
 All good things are in the west.
 Till mid-noon the cool east light
 Is shut out by the round of the tall hill brow,
 But, when the full-faced sunset yellowly
 Stays on the flowering arch of the bough,
 The luscious fruitage clustereth mellowly,
 Golden-kernell'd, golden-cored,
 Sunset-ripen'd above on the tree.
 The world is wasted with fire and sword,
 But the Apple of gold hangs over the Seal
 Five links—a golden chain—are we
 Hesper, the Dragon, and Sisters three,
 Daughters three,
 Bound about,
 All round about
 The gnarléd bole of the charméed tree.
 The Golden Apple, The Golden Apple, The hallow'd fruit,
 Guard it well, guard it warily,
 Watch it warily,
 Singing airily,
 Standing about the charméed root.

THE LOTOS-EATERS¹

'Courage!' he said, and pointed toward the land,
'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

¹Ulysses, during his ten-years homeward wandering from Troy (Ilion), comes to the land of the Lotos Eaters. His men are given the Lotos fruit to eat, whereupon they forget their longing for home and wish to stay in the Lotos land forever. The Prologue is in the Spenserian stanza, the only example found in Tennyson's published works.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
 Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
 And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
 Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
 Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
 Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
 Then some one said, 'We will return no more;'
 And all at once they sang, 'Our island home
 Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
 Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
 skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
 And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

2

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
 While all things else have rest from weariness?
 All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
 We only toil, who are the first of things,
 And make perpetual moan,
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
 Nor ever fold our wings,
 And cease from wanderings,
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
 Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
 "There is no joy but calm!"
 Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

3

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
 With winds upon the branch, and there
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,

Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
 Falls, and floats adown the air.
 Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days,
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

4

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
 Death is the end of life; ah, why
 Should life all labour be?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last?
 All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
 In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful
 ease.

5

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
 Eating the Lotos day by day,
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
 To muse and brood and live again in memory,
 With those old faces of our infancy,
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

6

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our wives
 And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change:
 For surely now our household hearths are cold:
 Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle?
 Let what is broken so remain.
 The Gods are hard to reconcile:
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There is confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labour unto aged breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

7

But, propt on beds of amaranth¹ and moly,²
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
 With half-dropt eyelid still,
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
 His waters from the purple hill—
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

8

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
 All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone:
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-
 dust is blown.
 We have had enough of action, and of motion we,

¹A magic plant, supposed never to fade.

²A magic flower, mentioned by Homer in the Odyssey.

Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was
 seething free,
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains
 in the sea.
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
 On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
 For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
 Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly
 curl'd
 Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
 world:
 Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps
 and fiery sands,
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,
 and praying hands.
 But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful
 song
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
 'Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd
 —down in hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the
 shore
 Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and
 oar;
 Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

1832

CENONE¹

There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
 The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,

¹Daughter of the river-god Cebren, mated to Paris, son of Priam King of Troy. Owing to a prophecy that he would bring ruin to his country, Paris had been exposed on Mount Ida immediately after birth. He survived, became a shepherd on the mountain, and was ultimately taken back by his parents. When strife arose between Herè, Queen of the gods, Pallas, goddess of wisdom, and Aphroditè, goddess of love, for the Prize of Beauty, Paris was chosen as judge. He awarded the Prize, a golden apple, to Aphroditè, in return for her promise of Helen, wife of King Menelaus, as mate. Paris then deserted Cènone, carried off Helen, and brought about the Trojan war.

Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
 The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
 Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
 Mournful CEnone, wandering forlorn
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
 Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
 Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
 Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
 The purple flower droops: the golden bee
 Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
 My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
 And I am all aweary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
 That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,
 I am the daughter of a River-God,
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
 Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
 A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be
 That, while I speak of it, a little while
 My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many fountain'd Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 I waited underneath the dawning hills,

Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy dark,
And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With downdropt eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's:
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
'That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

' "My own Cēnone,
Beautiful-brow'd Cēnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added "This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods,
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due:
But light-foot Iris¹ brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herē comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphroditē, claiming each
'This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

¹Goddess of the rainbow, and messenger of the gods.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnight: one silvery cloud
 Had lost his way between the piney sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
 Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,¹
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
 Wherewith to embellish state, "from many a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
 Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.
 Honour," she said, "and homage, tax and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven large,
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
 "Which in all action is the end of all;
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
 And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss
 In knowledge of their own supremacy."

¹The peacock was an emblem of Herè.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

' "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: "I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commensure perfect freedom."

'Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair

Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
 And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
 Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee
 The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,"
 She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
 And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
 And I was left alone within the bower;
 And from that time to this I am alone,
 And I shall be alone until I die.

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?
 My love hath told me so a thousand times.
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
 When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
 Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.¹

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
 High over the blue gorge, and all between
 The snowy peak and show-white cataract
 Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
 The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
 Low in the valley. Never, never more
 Shall lone Cēnone see the morning mist
 Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
 Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

¹One of the rivers of Troy.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
 Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
 The Abominable, that uninvited came
 Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
 And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
 And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
 And tell her to her face how much I hate
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
 In this green valley, under this green hill,
 Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
 O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
 O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
 O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
 There are enough unhappy on this earth,
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
 Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
 Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
 Conjectures of the features of her child
 Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes
 Across me: never child be born of me,
 Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
 Walking the cold and starless road of Death
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
 With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth

Talk with the wild Cassandra,¹ for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

1832

TO THE MASTER OF BALLIOL²

1

Dear Master in our classic town,
You, loved by all the younger gown
There at Balliol,
Lay your Plato for one minute down,

2

And read a Grecian tale re-told,
Which, cast in later Grecian mould,
Quintus Calaber
Somewhat lazily handled of old;

3

And on this white midwinter day—
For have the far-off hymns of May,
All her melodies,
All her harmonies echo'd away?—

4

To-day, before you turn again
To thoughts that lift the soul of men,
Hear my cataract's
Downward thunder in hollow and glen,

5

Till, led by dream and vague desire,
The woman, gliding toward the pyre,
Find her warrior
Stark and dark in his funeral fire.

¹Daughter of Priam, given the power of prophecy by the god Apollo. Because she refused his love, he punished her by ordaining that her prophecies should never be believed.

²The following poem, the sequel to *Cenone*, was written sixty years later and published after Tennyson's death. It was dedicated to Benjamin Jowett, translator of Plato, and one of Tennyson's most intimate friends from 1850 onwards.

THE DEATH OF CENONE

Cenone sat within the cave from out
Whose ivy-matted mouth she used to gaze
Down at the Troad; but the goodly view
Was now one blank, and all the serpent vines
Which on the touch of heavenly feet had risen,
And gliding thro' the branches over-bower'd
The naked Three, were wither'd long ago,
And thro' the sunless winter morning-mist
In silence wept upon the flowerless earth.

And while she stared at those dead cords that ran
Dark thro' the mist, and linking tree to tree,
But once were gayer than a dawning sky
With many a pendent bell and fragrant star,
Her Past became her Present, and she saw
Him, climbing toward her with the golden fruit,
Him, happy to be chosen Judge of Gods,
Her husband in the flush of youth and dawn,
Paris, himself as beauteous as a God.

Anon from out the long ravine below,
She heard a wailing cry, that seem'd at first
Thin as the batlike shrillings of the Dead
When driven to Hades, but, in coming near,
Across the downward thunder of the brook
Sounded 'Cenone'; and on a sudden he,
Paris, no longer beauteous as a God.
Struck by a poison'd arrow in the fight,
Lame, crooked, reeling, livid, thro' the mist
Rose, like the wraith of his dead self, and moan'd

'Cenone, my Cenone, while we dwelt
Together in this valley—happy then—
Too happy had I died within thine arms,
Before the feud of Gods had marr'd our peace,
And sunder'd each from each. I am dying now
Pierced by a poison'd dart. Save me, 'Thou knowest,
Taught by some God, whatever herb or balm
May clear the blood from poison, and thy fame
Is blown thro' all the Troad, and to thee,
The shepherd brings his adder-bitter lamb,
The wounded warrior climbs from Troy to thee.
My life and death are in thy hand. The Gods
Avenge on stony hearts a fruitless prayer
For pity. Let me owe my life to thee.
I wrought thee bitter wrong, but thou forgive,
Forget it. Man is but the slave of Fate.

Ænone, by thy love which once was mine,
Help, heal me. I am poison'd to the heart.'
'And I to mine,' she said 'Adulterer,
Go back to thine adulteress and die!'

He groan'd, he turn'd, and in the mist at once
Became a shadow, sank and disappear'd,
But, ere the mountain rolls into the plain,
Fell headlong dead; and of the shepherds one
Their oldest, and the same who first had found
Paris, a naked babe, among the woods
Of Ida, following lighted on him there,
And shouted, and the shepherds heard and came.

One raised the Prince, one sleek'd the squalid hair,
One kiss'd his hand, another closed his eyes,
And then, remembering the gay playmate rear'd
Among them, and forgetful of the man,
Whose crime had half unpeopled Ilion, these
All that day long labour'd, hewing the pines,
And built their shepherd-prince a funeral pile;
And, while the star of eve was drawing light
From the dead sun, kindled the pyre, and all
Stood round it, hush'd or calling on his name.

But when the white fog vanish'd like a ghost
Before the day, and every topmost pine
Spired into bluest heaven, still in her cave,
Amazed, and ever seeming stared upon
By ghastlier than the Gorgon head,¹ a face,—
His face deform'd by lurid blotch and blain—
There, like a creature frozen to the heart
Beyond all hope of warmth, Ænone sat
Not moving, till in front of the ravine
Which drowns in gloom, self-darken'd from the west,
The sunset blazed along the wall of Troy.

Then her head sank, she slept, and thro' her dream
A ghostly murmur floated, 'Come to me,
Ænone! I can wrong thee now no more,
Ænone, my Ænone,' and the dream
Wail'd in her, when she woke beneath the stars.

What star could burn so low? not Ilion yet.
What light was there? She rose and slowly down,
By the long torrent's ever-deepen'd roar,
Paced, following, as in trance, the silent cry.
She waked a bird of prey that scream'd and past;
She roused a snake that hissing writhed away;
A panther sprang across her path, she heard

¹The head of the Gorgon *Medusa*, cut off by Perseus, turned anyone who looked at it into stone.

The shriek of some lost life among the pines,
 But when she gain'd the broader vale, and saw
 The ring of faces redden'd by the flames
 Enfolding that dark body which had lain
 Of old in her embrace, paused—and then ask'd
 Falteringly, 'Who lies on yonder pyre?'
 But every man was mute for reverence.
 Then moving quickly forward till the heat
 Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice
 Of shrill command, 'Who burns upon the pyre?'
 Whereon their oldest and their boldest said,
 'He, whom thou wouldst not heal!' and all at once
 The morning light of happy marriage broke
 Thro' all the clouded years of widowhood,
 And muffling up her comely head, and crying
 'Husband!' she leapt upon the funeral pile,
 And mixt herself with *him* and past in fire.

1892

ULYSSES¹

It little profits that an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole ●
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
 I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
 Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
 Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known; cities of men
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
 For ever and for ever when I move.

¹This poem is based on a passage at the end of the twenty-sixth book of Dante's *Inferno*, which tells how Ulysses, after his return home to Ithaca, in spite of his ten years' fighting against Troy and his ten years' wandering on the way home, could not rest, but set off again in a single ship with a handful of comrades, in search of knowledge and adventure.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me
 Little remains: but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
 with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

1842

TITHONUS¹

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,

¹*Tithonus* was loved by Aurora, the goddess of dawn, who gave him eternal life but not eternal youth. He grew old, therefore, while she remained eternally young.

And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lol ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Ay, mel ay mel with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.¹

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die.
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

1860

an early poem revised

¹See note on page 137.

LUCRETII

This poem was founded on the tradition that the Latin poet Lucretius killed himself, after being driven mad by a love potion given him by his wife Lucilia (A.D. 55). He wrote a philosophical poem *about the nature of things*, in which he asserted that the Universe is made up of atoms in perpetual motion, and that the soul also is made up of material particles, inconceivably fine and diffused throughout the body, apart from which it cannot exist. He also maintained that knowledge can only be acquired through the senses; that the gods, who are also made of material particles, take no concern in the affairs of men; that there is no life after death. He attacked superstition with religious zeal and seems to have been sceptical about the divinity of the gods.

Lucilia, wedded to Lucretius, found
 Her master cold; for when the morning flush
 Of passion and the first embrace had died
 Between them, tho' he lov'd her none the less,
 Yet often when the woman heard his foot
 Return from pacings in the field, and ran
 To greet him with a kiss, the master took
 Small notice, or austere, for—his mind
 Half buried in some weightier argument,
 Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise
 And long roll of the Hexameter—he past
 To turn and ponder those three hundred scrolls
 Left by the Teacher,¹ whom he held divine.
 She brook'd it not; but wrathful, petulant,
 Dreaming some rival, sought and found a witch
 Who brew'd the philtre which had power, they said,
 To lead an errant passion home again.
 And this, at times, she mingled with his drink,
 And this destroy'd him: for the wicked broth
 Confused the chemic labour of the blood,
 And tickling the brute brain within the man's
 Made havock among those tender cells, and check'd
 His power to shape: he loathed himself; and once
 After a tempest woke upon a morn
 That mock'd him with returning calm, and cried:

'Storm in the night! for thrice I heard the rain
 Rushing; and once the flash of a thunderbolt—
 Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—
 Struck out the streaming mountain-side, and show'd
 A riotous confluence of watercourses
 Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,
 Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

¹Lucretius' master, Epicurus.

'Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods, what dreams!
 For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Perchance
 We do but recollect the dreams that come
 Just ere the waking: terrible! for it seem'd
 A void was made in Nature; all her bonds
 Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-streams
 And torrents of her myriad universe,
 Ruining along the illimitable inane,
 Fly on to clash together again, and make
 Another and another frame of things
 For ever: that was mine, my dream, I knew it—
 Of and belonging to me, as the dog
 With inward yelp and restless forefoot plies
 His function of the woodland: but the next!
 I thought that all the blood by Sylla¹ shed
 Came driving rainlike down again on earth,
 And where it dash'd the reddening meadow, sprang
 No dragon warriors from Cadmean² teeth,
 For these I thought my dream would show to me,
 But girls, Hetairai,³ curious in their art,

Hired animalisms, vile as those that made
 The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse
 Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.
 And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round me drove
 In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
 Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—
 Was it the first beam of my latest day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood out the breasts,
 The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a sword
 Now over and now under, now direct,
 Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down shamed
 At all that beauty, and as I stared, a fire,
 The fire that left a roofless Ilium,
 Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that I woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus, thine,
 Because I would not one of thine own doves,
 Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee? thine,
 Forgetful how my rich procœmion makes
 Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
 In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

¹ A Roman general who in 82 B.C. made himself dictator and carried out a purge of his enemies.

² See page 167, introductory note to *Tiresias*.

³ Courtezans.

'Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of these
Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and scorn,
Live the great life which all our greatest fain
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like ourselves,
Touch and be touch'd, then would I cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors,¹ roll thy tender arms
Round him, and keep him from the lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-house of Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant not her,
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and tempt
The Trojan,² while his neat-herds were abroad;
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter³ wept
Her Deity false in human-amorous tears;
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse—
Ay, and this Kypris⁴ also—did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow forth
The all-generating powers and genial heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the thick blood
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are glad
Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of flowers:
Which things appear the work of mighty Gods.

'The Gods! and if I go *my* work is left
Unfinish'd—if I go. The Gods, who haunt
The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mår
Their sacred everlasting calm! and such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain

¹Old Latin name for Mars the god of war, husband of Venus.

²Anchises was the Trojan, by whom Venus was said to have conceived Aeneas.

³Adonis.

⁴A name for Venus.

Letting his own life go. The Gods, the Gods!
 If all be atoms, how then should the Gods
 Being atomic not be dissoluble,
 Not follow the great law? My master held
 That Gods there are, for all men so believe.
 I prest my footsteps into his, and meant
 Surely to lead my Memmius¹ in a train
 Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
 That Gods there are, and deathless. Meant? I meant?
 I have forgotten what I meant: my mind
 Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

'Look where another of our Gods, the Sun,
 Apollo, Delius, or of older use
 All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—
 Has mounted yonder; since he never sware,
 Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched man,
 That he would only shine among the dead
 Hereafter; tales! for never yet on earth
 Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox
 Moan round the spit—nor knows he what he sees;
 King of the East altho' he seem, and girt
 With song and flame and fragrance, slowly lifts
 His golden feet on those empurpled stairs
 That climb into the windy halls of heaven:
 And here he glances on an eye new-born,
 And gets for greeting but a wail of pain;
 And here he stays upon a freezing orb
 That fain would gaze upon him to the last;
 And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n
 And closed by those who mourn a friend in vain,
 Not thankful that his troubles are no more.
 And me, altho' his fire is on my face
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
 Whether I mean this day to end myself,
 Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
 That men like soldiers may not quit the post
 Allotted by the Gods: but he that holds
 The Gods are careless, wherefore need he care
 Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at once,
 Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and sink
 Past earthquake—ay, and gout and stone, that break
 Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life,
 And wretched age—and worst disease of all,
 These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,
 And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,

¹*Caius Memmius Gemellus* to whom Lucretius' poem was dedicated.

Abominable, strangers at my hearth
 Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,
 The phantom husks of something foully done,
 And fleeting thro' the boundless universe,
 And blasting the long quiet of my breast
 With animal heat and dire insanity?

'How should the mind, except it loved them, clasp
 These idols to herself? or do they fly
 Now thinner, and now thicker, like the flakes
 In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce
 Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour
 Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear
 The keepers down, and throng, their rags and they
 The basest, far into that council-hall
 Where sit the best and stateliest of the land?

'Can I not fling this horror off me again,
 Seeing with how great ease Nature can smile,
 Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,
 At random ravage? and how easily
 The mountain there has cast his cloudy slough,
 Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
 A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and within
 All hollow as the hopes and fears of men?

'But who was he, that in the garden snared
 Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale
 To laugh at—more to laugh at in myself—
 For look! what is it? there? yon arbutus
 Totters; a noiseless riot underneath
 Strikes through the wood, sets all the tops quivering—
 The mountain quickens into Nymph and Faun;
 And here an Oread—how the sun delights
 To glance and shift about her slippery sides,
 And rosy knees and supple roundedness,
 And budded bosom-peaks—who this way runs
 Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,
 Follows; but him I proved impossible;
 Twy-natured is no nature: yet he draws
 Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now
 Beastlier than any phantom of his kind
 That ever butted his rough brother-brute
 For lust or lusty blood or provender:
 I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and she

Loathes him as well; such a precipitate heel,
 Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-wing,
 Whirls her to me: but will she fling herself,
 Shameless, upon me? Catch her, goat-foot: nay,
 Hide, hide them, million-myrtdled wilderness,
 And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide! do I wish—
 What?—that the bush were leafless? or to overwhelm
 All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,
 I know you careless, yet, behold, to you
 From childly wont and ancient use I call—
 I thought I lived securely as yourselves—
 No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-spite,
 No madness of ambition, avarice, none:
 No larger feast than under plane or pine
 With neighbours laid along the grass, to take
 Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,
 Affirming each his own philosophy—
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
 But now it seems some unseen monster lays
 His vast and filthy hands upon my will,
 Wrenching it backward into his; and spoils
 My bliss in being; and it was not great;
 For save when shutting reasons up in rhythm,
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,
 To make a truth less harsh, I often grew
 Tired of so much within out little life,
 Or of so little in our little life—
 Poor little life that toddles half an hour
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end—
 And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,
 Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,
 Not manlike end myself?—our privilege—
 What beast has heart to do it? And what man,
 What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph thus?
 Not I; not he, who bears one name with her¹
 Whose death-blow, struck the dateless doom of kings,
 When, brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,
 She made her blood in sight of Collatine
 And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,
 Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.
 And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which breaks
 As I am breaking now!

¹Lucretia, wife of Lucius Tarquinius of Collatina. According to an old legend she was ravished by Sextus, son of Tarquinius Superbus, the last King of Rome. She stabbed herself after making her husband promise to drive the Tarquins from Rome. Afterwards, Rome became a Republic.

‘And therefore now

Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,
 Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
 Those blind beginnings that have made me man,
 Dash them anew together at her will
 Thro’ all her cycles—into man once more,
 Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower:
 But till this cosmic order everywhere
 Shatter’d into one earthquake in one day
 Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour perhaps
 Is not so far when momentary man
 Shall seem no more a something to himself,
 But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,
 And even his bones long laid within the grave,
 The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,
 Into the unseen for ever,—till that hour,
 My golden work in which I told a truth
 That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,¹
 And numbs the Fury’s ringlet-snake,² and plucks
 The mortal soul from out immortal hell,
 Shall stand: ay, surely: then it fails at last
 And perishes as I must; for O Thou,
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
 Yearn’d after by the wisest of the wise,
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art
 Without one pleasure and without one pain,
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
 How roughly men may woo thee so they win—
 Thus—thus: the soul flies out and dies in the air.’

With that he drove the knife into his side:
 She heard him raging, heard him fall; ran in,
 Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon herself
 As having fail’d in duty to him, shriek’d
 That she but meant to win him back, fell on him,
 Clasp’d, kiss’d him, wail’d: he answer’d, ‘Care not thou!
 Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee well!’

1868

¹See note 2 on page 184:

²The Furies were infernal goddesses with snakes for hair:

TO E. FITZGERALD¹

Old Fitz, who from your suburb grange,
 Where once I tarried for a while,
 Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,
 And greet it with a kindly smile;
 Whom yet I see as there you sit
 Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,
 And while your doves about you flit,
 And plant on shoulder, hand and knee,
 Or on your head their rosy feet,
 As if they knew your diet spares
 Whatever moved in that full sheet
 Let down to Peter at his prayers;²
 Who live on milk and meal and grass;
 And once for ten long weeks I tried
 Your table of Pythagoras,³
 And seem'd at first a 'thing enskied'⁴
 (As Shakespeare has it) airy-light
 To float above the ways of men,
 Then fell from that half-spiritual height
 Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again
 One night when earth was winter-black,
 And all the heavens flash'd in frost;
 And on me, half-asleep, came back
 That wholesome heat the blood had lost,
 And set me climbing icy capes
 And glaciers, over which there roll'd
 To meet me long-arm'd vines with grapes
 Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold
 Without, and warmth within me, wrought
 To mould the dream; but none can say
 That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought,
 Who reads your golden Eastern lay,
 Than which I know no version done
 In English more divinely well;
 A planet equal to the sun
 Which cast it, that large infidel

¹Tennyson dedicated the following revised early poem to Edward FitzGerald, translator of Omar Khayyam, whom he had in 1876 visited at his house "The Grange," Woodbridge, Suffolk. Before the poem was published, FitzGerald had died.

²See Acts XI. 5. FitzGerald was a vegetarian.

³A sixth-century (B.C.) Greek philosopher, who, believing in the transmigration of souls and the blood brotherhood of men and the beasts, abstained from all flesh foods.

⁴*Measure for Measure*. Act I, sc. IV, l. 34.

Your Omar; and your Omar drew
 Full-handed plaudits from our best
 In modern letters, and from two,¹
 Old friends outvaluing all the rest,
 Two voices heard on earth no more;
 But we old friends are still alive,
 And I am nearing seventy-four,
 While you have touch'd at seventy-five,
 And so I send a birthday line
 Of greeting; and my son, who dipt
 In some forgotten book of mine
 With sallow scraps of manuscript,
 And dating many a year ago,
 Has hit on this, which you will take
 My Fitz, and welcome, as I know
 Less for its own than for the sake
 Of one recalling gracious times,
 When, in our younger London days,
 You found some merit in my rhymes,
 And I more pleasure in your praise.

TIRESIAS

According to an old Greek legend, Tiresias was a native of Thebes, the capital of Boeotia, which had been founded by Cadmus. Before he achieved this, Cadmus had to kill a dragon which guarded the neighbouring fountain of Dirce, sacred to Arès the god of war, and sow the dragon's teeth in the ground. From them there sprang up a band of warriors, with whose assistance he founded and built the city. The gods, who were hostile to Cadmus and his descendants, sent the Sphinx, a monster with a woman's head and breasts, a lion's paws, bird's wings, a dog's body and a serpent's tail, to persecute the Thebans. She propounded riddles to them, and devoured those who could not solve them. Œdipus answered her riddle, whereupon she killed herself and he was made King.

Tiresias was struck blind because he had, unintentionally, seen Pallas Athene, the goddess of wisdom, bathing naked in a wood. In compensation, the gods gave him the power of prophecy. Tennyson seems to have transferred to Tiresias the punishment inflicted on Cassandra, daughter of Priam, King of Troy, by the god Apollo (whose love she had rejected) that her prophecies should never be believed. When Thebes was attacked by Polynices, the exiled brother of the Theban King Eteocles, Tiresias prophesied that the city could only be saved by the voluntary death of a descendant of one of the warriors who had sprung from the dragon's teeth. Menœceus thereupon killed himself and the Thebans were victorious.

I wish I were as in the years of old,
 While yet the blessed daylight made itself
 Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and woke
 These eyes, now dull, but then so keen to seek

¹James Spedding (d. 1881) and W. H. Brookfield (d. 1874).

The meanings ambush'd under all they saw,
The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,
What omens may foreshadow fate to man
And woman, and the secret of the Gods.

My son, the Gods, despite of human prayer,
Are slower to forgive than human kings.
The great God, Arès, burns in anger still
Against the guiltless heirs of him from Tyre,
Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art, who found
Beside the springs of Dircê, smote, and still'd
Thro' all its folds the multitudinous beast,
The dragon, which our trembling fathers call'd
The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,
When but thine age, by age as winter-white
As mine is now, amazed, but made me yearn
For larger glimpses of that more than man
Which rolls the heavens, and lifts, and lays the deep,
Yet loves and hates with mortal hates and loves,
And moves unseen among the ways of men.

Then, in my wanderings all the lands that lie
Subjected to the Heliconian ridge
Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my wont
Was more to scale the highest of the heights
With some strange hope to see the nearer God.

One naked peak, the sister of the sun,
Would climb from out the dark, and linger there
To silver all the valleys with her shafts—
There once, but long ago, five-fold thy term
Of years, I lay; the winds were dead for heat;
The noonday crag made the hand burn; and sick
For shadow—not one bush was near—I rose
Following a torrent till its myriad falls
Found silence in the hollows underneath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw
Pallas Athene climbing from the bath
In anger; yet one glittering foot disturb'd
The lucid well; one snowy knee was prest
Against the margin flowers; a dreadful light
Came from her golden hair, her golden helm
And all her golden armour on the grass,
And from her virgin breast, and virgin eyes
Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew dark
For ever, and I heard a voice that said
'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen too much,
And speak the truth that no man may believe.'

Son, in the hidden world of sight, that lives

Behind this darkness, I behold her still,
 Beyond all work of those who carve the stone,
 Beyond all dreams of Godlike womanhood,
 Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a glance,
 And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd
 The power of prophesying—but to me
 No power—so chain'd and coupled with the curse
 Of blindness and their unbelief, who heard
 And heard not, when I spake of famine, plague,
 Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire, flood, thunderbolt,
 And angers of the Gods for evil done
 And expiation lack'd—no power on Fate,
 Theirs, or mine own! for when the crowd would roar
 For blood, for war, whose issue was their doom,
 To cast wise words among the multitude
 Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in hours
 Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain
 Would each waste each, and bring on both the yoke
 Of stronger states, was mine the voice to curb
 The madness of our cities, and their kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear
 My warning that the tyranny of one
 Was prelude to the tyranny of all?
 My counsel that the tyranny of all
 Led backward to the tyranny of one?

This power hath work'd no good to aught that lives,
 And these blind hands were useless in their war—
 O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire,
 The grief for ever born from griefs to be,
 The boundless yearning of the Prophet's heart—
 Could *that* stand forth, and like a statue, rear'd
 To some great citizen, win all praise from all
 Who past it, saying, "That was he!"

In vain!
 Virtue must shape itself in deed, and those
 Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd
 Within themselves, immersing, each, his urn
 In his own well, draw solace as he may.

Menœceus, thou hast eyes, and I can hear
 Too plainly what full tides of onset sap
 Our seven high gates, and what a weight of war
 Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of bits,
 Shouts, arrows, tramp of the hornfooted horse
 That grind the glebe to powder! Stony showers
 Of that ear-stunning hail of Arès crash
 Along the sounding walls. Above, below,
 Shock after shock, the song-built towers and gates

Reel, bruised and butted with the shuddering
 War-thunder of iron rams; and from within
 The city comes a murmur void of joy,
 Lest she be taken captive—maidens, wives,
 And mothers with their babblers of the dawn,
 And oldest age in shadow from the night,
 Falling about their shrines before their Gods,
 And wailing 'Save us.'

And they wail to thee!
 These eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine own,
 See this, that only in thy virtue lies
 The saving of our Thebes; for, yester-night,
 To me, the great God Arès, whose one bliss
 Is war, and human sacrifice—himself
 Blood-red from battle, spear and helmet tip
 With stormy light as on a mast at sea,
 Stood out before a darkness, crying 'Thebes,
 Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I loathe
 The seed of Cadmus—yet if one of these
 By his own hand—if one of these——'

My son,
 No sound is breathed so potent to coerce,
 And to conciliate, as their names who dare
 For that sweet mother land which gave them birth
 Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,
 Graven on memorial columns, are a song
 Heard in the future; few, but more than wall
 And rampart, their examples reach a hand
 Far thro' all years, and everywhere they meet
 And kindle generous purpose, and the strength
 To mould it into action pure as theirs.

Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best end
 Be to end well! and thou refusing this,
 Unvenerable will thy memory be
 While men shall move the lips: but if thou dare—
 Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus—then
 No stone is fitted in yon marble girth
 Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious doom,
 Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy name
 To every hoof that clangs it, and the springs
 Of Dircê laving yonder battle-plain,
 Heard from the roofs by night, will murmur thee
 To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro' thee shall
 stand

Firm-based with all her Gods.

The Dragon's cave
 Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing vines—

Where once he dwelt and whence he roll'd himself
 At dead of night—thou knowest, and that smooth rock
 Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late
 The woman-breasted Sphinx, with wings drawn back,
 Folded her lion paws, and look'd to Thebes.
 There blanch the bones of whom she slew, and these
 Mixt with her own, because the fierce beast found
 A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself
 Dead in her rage: but thou art wise enough,
 Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the curse
 Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the truth
 Believe I speak it, let thine own hand strike
 Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench
 The red God's anger, fearing not to plunge
 Thy torch of life in darkness, rather—thou
 Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the stars
 Send no such light upon the ways of men
 As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there
 Thou, that hast never known the embrace of love,
 Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!
 I felt one warm tear fall upon it. Gone!
 He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,
 I would that I were gather'd to my rest,
 And mingled with the famous kings of old,
 On whom about their ocean-islets flash
 The faces of the Gods—the wise man's word,
 Here trampled by the populace underfoot,
 There crown'd with worship—and these eyes will find
 The men I knew, and watch the chariot whirl
 About the goal again, and hunters race
 The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,
 In height and prowess more than human, strive
 Again for glory, while the golden lyre
 Is ever sounding in heroic ears
 Heroic hymns, and every way the vales
 Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume
 Of those who mix all odour to the Gods
 On one far height in one far-shining fire.

'One height and one far-shining fire'
 And while I fancied that my friend
 For this brief idyll would require
 A less diffuse and opulent end,

And would defend his judgment well,
 If I should deem it over nice—
 The tolling of his funeral bell
 Broke on my Pagan Paradise,
 And mixt the dream of classic times
 And all the phantoms of the dream,
 With present grief, and made the rhymes,
 That miss'd his living welcome, seem
 Like would-be guests an hour too late,
 Who down the highway moving on
 With easy laughter find the gate
 Is bolted, and the master gone.
 Gone into darkness, that full light
 Of friendship! past, in sleep, away
 By night, into the deeper night!
 The deeper night? A clearer day
 Than our poor twilight dawn on earth—
 If night, what barren toil to be!
 What life, so maim'd by night, were worth
 Our living out? Not mine to me
 Remembering all the golden hours
 Now silent, and so many dead,
 And him the last; and laying flowers,
 This wreath, above his honour'd head,
 And praying that, when I from hence
 Shall fade with him into the unknown,
 My close of earth's experience
 May prove as peaceful as his own.

TO PROFESSOR JEBB,¹

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

Fair things are slow to fade away,
 Bear witness you, that yesterday
 From out the Ghost of Pindar in you
 Roll'd an Olympian; and they say

That here the torpid mummy wheat
 Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet
 As that which gilds the glebe of England,
 Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

¹R. C. Jebb, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, had in 1888 written an original Pindaric ode in Greek to celebrate the 8th centenary of the University of Bologna.

So may this legend for awhile,
If greeted by your classic smile,
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,
Blossom again on a colder isle.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE¹

(*In Enna*)

Faint as a climate-changing bird that flies
All night across the darkness, and at dawn
Falls on the threshold of her native land,
And can no more, thou camest, O my child,
Led upward by the God of ghosts and dreams,
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb
With passing thro' at once from state to state,
Until I brought thee hither, that the day,
When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower,
Might break thro' clouded memories once again
On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song
And welcome; and a gleam as of the moon,
When first she peers along the tremulous deep,
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away
That shadow of a likeness to the king
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!
Queen of the dead no more—my child!
Thine eyes
Again were human-godlike, and the Sun
Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray,
And robed thee in his day from head to feet—
'Mother!' and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd eyes
Awed even me at first, thy mother—eyes
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded power²
Draw downward into Hades with his drift
Of flickering spectres, lighted from below

¹*Demeter* was the goddess of corn and agriculture. *Persephone*, her daughter, goddess of spring, was carried off by *Hades* (or *Aidoneus*) god of the underworld and brother of *Zeus*, god of the upper world, while gathering flowers near *Enna* in *Sicily*. In her rage and grief *Demeter* caused famine on the earth and, to appease her, *Zeus* arranged that *Persephone* should thereafter spend nine months on earth with her mother and only three with *Hades* in the underworld.

²The god *Hermes*, who, with his magic wand wreathed with snakes, conducted the souls of the dead to the underworld.

By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;¹
 But when before have Gods or men beheld
 The Life that had descended re-arise,
 And lighted from above him by the Sun?
 So mighty was the mother's childless cry,
 A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,
 The field of Enna, now once more ablaze
 With flowers that brighten as thy footstep falls,
 All flowers—but for one black blur of earth
 Left by that closing chasm, thro' which the car
 Of dark Aïdoneus rising rapt thee hence.
 And here, my child, tho' folded in thine arms,
 I feel the deathless heart of motherhood
 Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe
 Should yawn once more into the gulf, and thence
 The shrilly whinnings of the team of Hell,
 Ascending, pierce the glad and songful air,
 And all at once their arch'd necks, midnight-maned,
 Jet upward thro' the mid-day blossom. No!
 For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all the space
 Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself afresh,
 And breaks into the crocus-purple hour
 That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,
 I envied human wives, and nested birds,
 Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in search of thee
 Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and gave
 Thy² breast to ailing infants in the night,
 And set the mother waking in amaze
 To find her sick one whole; and forth again
 Among the wail of midnight winds, and cried,
 'Where is my loved one? Wherefore do ye wail?'
 And out from all the night an answer shrill'd,
 'We know not, and we know not why we wail.'
 I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,
 And ask'd the waves that moan about the world
 'Where? do ye make your moaning for my child?'
 And round from all the world the voices came
 'We know not, and we know not why we moan.'
 'Where?' and I stared from every eagle-peak,
 I thridded the black heart of all the woods,
 I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in the storms

¹A river of fire, one of the boundaries of Hades.

²Meaning 'The breast which had suckled thee'.

Of Autumn swept across the city, and heard
 The murmur of their temples chanting me,
 Me, me, the desolate Mother! 'Where'?—and turn'd,
 And fled by many a waste, forlorn of man,
 And grieved for man thro' all my grief for thee—,
 The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,
 The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,
 The scorpion crawling over naked skulls;—
 I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane
 Spring from his fallen God, but trace of thee
 I saw not; and far on, and, following out
 A league of labyrinthine darkness, came
 On three gray heads¹ beneath a gleaming rift.
 'Where'? and I heard one voice from all the three
 'We know not, for we spin the lives of men,
 And not of Gods, and know not why we spin!
 There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying man,
 Without his knowledge, from him flits to warn
 A far-off friendship that he comes no more,
 So he, the God of dreams, who heard my cry,
 Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself
 Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow past
 Before me, crying 'The Bright one in the highest
 Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,
 And Bright and Dark have sworn that I, the child
 Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee, the Power
 That lifts her buried life from gloom to bloom,
 Should be for ever and for evermore
 The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.
 Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the Gods of Heaven.
 I would not mingle with their feasts; to me
 Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on the lips,
 Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.
 The man, that only lives and loves an hour,
 Seem'd nobler than their hard Eternities.
 My quick tears kill'd the flower, my ravings hush'd
 The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd
 To send my life thro' olive-yard and vine
 And golden grain, my gift to helpless man.
 Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-spears

¹The three fates who spin the thread of each man's life. When the thread breaks the man dies.

Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and the sun,
Pale at my grief, drew down before his time
Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter snow.

Then He, the brother of this Darkness, He
Who still is highest, glancing from his height
On earth, a fruitless fallow, when he miss'd
The wonted steam of sacrifice, the praise
And prayer of men, decreed that thou should'st dwell
For nine white moons of each whole year with me,
Three dark ones in the shadow with thy King.

Once more the reaper in the gleam of dawn
Will see me by the landmark far away,
Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,
Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-content
With them, who still are highest. Those gray heads,
What meant they by their 'Fate beyond the Fates'
But younger kindlier Gods¹ to bear us down,
As we bore down the Gods before us? Gods,
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to stay,
Not spread the plague, the famine; Gods indeed,
To send the noon into the night and break
The sunless halls of Hades into Heaven?
Till thy dark lord accept and love the Sun,
And all the Shadow die into the Light,
When thou shalt dwell the whole bright year with me,
And souls of men, who grew beyond their race,
And made themselves as Gods against the fear
Of Death and Hell; and thou that hast from men,
As Queen of Death, that worship which is Fear,
Henceforth, as having risen from out the dead,
Shalt ever send thy life along with mine
From buried grain thro' springing blade, and bless
Their garner'd Autumn also, reap with me,
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of Earth
The worship which is Love, and see no more
The Stone,² the Wheel,³ the dimly-glimmering lawns
Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior glide
Along the silent field of Asphodel.⁴

1889

¹These words point forward to the ousting of Paganism by Christianity.

²The stone and the wheel were torments in the Greek Hell. The *field of*

³*Asphodel* was a region in Hades where the heroes and demigods lived a life free from torment, but only a shadow of the life on earth.

Poems of 1842

Except where otherwise stated these poems were first published in the second of Tennyson's volumes of 1842. (See Introduction, page 29.)

This section gives rather an inadequate idea of that volume, many of the poems from which appear in other sections.

THE TWO VOICES¹

A still small voice spake unto me,
'Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said;
'Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply;
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said, 'When first the world began,
Young nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied;
'Self-blinded are you by your pride:
Look up thro' night: the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

¹This poem was written during the period of intense depression through which Tennyson passed after the death of Arthur Hallam. It was originally entitled *Thoughts of a Suicide*. In its general movement and some of its thought it foreshadows *In Memoriam*. An excellent summary of the poem will be found in *Tennyson. Poems Published in 1842* by A. M. D. Hughes (Clarendon Press, 1947).

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:
'No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly;
'Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

'Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not know,'
But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep:
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.'

I said, 'The years with change advance:
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might take,
Ev'n yet.' But he: 'What drug can make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

'And men, thro' novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,
'Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums, hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

' 'Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said, 'When I am gone away,
 "He dared not tarry," men will say,
 Doing dishonour to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,
 'To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
 Than once from dread of pain to die.'

'Sick art thou—a divided will
 Still heaping on the fear of ill
 The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
 To men, that how thy name may sound
 Will vex thee lying underground?

'The memory of the wither'd leaf
 In endless time is scarce more brief
 Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
 The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
 Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,
 'From emptiness and the waste wide
 Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

'Nay—rather yet that I could raise
 One hope that warm'd me in the days
 While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
 Among the tents I paused and sung,
 The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
 And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
 The brand, the buckler and the spear—

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,
 To war with falsehood to the knife,
 And not to lose the good of life—

'Some hidden principle to move,
 To put together, part and prove,
 And mete the bounds of hate and love—

'As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about—

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law:

'At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

'In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown;

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour?

'Then comes the check, the change, the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
Link'd month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth,
So were thy labour little-worth.

'That men with knowledge merely play'd,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

'Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold¹ is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion²-like;

'And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and brawll
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?
There is one remedy for all.'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die?

¹The expression refers to a fold of cloud.

²In Greek legend *Ixion* tried to seduce *Herè*, queen of the gods. She substituted an image of herself made out of a cloud, by which *Ixion* begat the Centaurs. To punish him Zeus bound him to a fiery wheel which rolls for ever through space.

'I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven:

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;

'But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
'Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with stones:

'But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
Gold's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt:
'Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

'And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new:

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence:

'For I go, weak from suffering here:
Naked I go, and void of cheer:
What is it that I may not fear?'

'Consider well,' the voice replied,
'His face, that two hours since hath died:
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

'Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his hands?
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast:
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek:
'Tho' some should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonour to her race—

'His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

'High up the vapours fold and swim:
About him broods the twilight dim:
'The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,
'These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

'The sap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

'I found him when my years were few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow crept:
In her still place the morning wept:
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

"The simple senses crown'd his head:
 "Omega! thou art Lord," they said,
 "We find no motion in the dead."

"Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
 Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
 Not make him sure that he shall cease?"

"Who forged that other influence,
 That heat of inward evidence,
 By which he doubts against the sense?"

"He owns the fatal¹ gift of eyes,
 That read his spirit blindly wise,
 Not simple as a thing that dies.

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly:
 His heart forebodes a mystery:
 He names the name Eternity.

"That type of Perfect in his mind
 In Nature can he nowhere find.
 He sows himself on every wind.

"He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
 And thro' thick veils to apprehend
 A labour working to an end.

"The end and the beginning vex
 His reason: many things perplex,
 With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

"He knows a baseness in his blood
 At such strange war with something good,
 He may not do the thing he would.

"Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
 Vast images in glimmering dawn,
 Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

"Ah! sure within him and without,
 Could his dark wisdom find it out,
 There must be answer to his doubt,

¹*Fatal* here means granted by fate. There should probably be a comma after *spirit* in the second line. The stanza would then mean that man has an instinctive and unreasoning (blind) perception which convinces him that his spirit is not simply a function of the body but immortal.

'But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain,

'The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

'Where wert thou when thy father play'd
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

'Before the little ducts began¹
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man:

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days:

'A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth!'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the rest;
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end;

'Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?

'I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

¹This is a description of the growth of the bones in the embryo.

'It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro' from state to state.

'As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

'So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

'Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night;

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—
'Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory:

'For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

'Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

'Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said he,
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, hast missed thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

'Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.

' 'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on:
I spoke, but answer came there none:
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighbourhood,
A notice faintly understood,
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes:

Such seem'd the whisper at my side:
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?' I cried
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied:

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers:
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along:
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong;

And all so variously wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of the street,
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,
 The snake slipt under a spray,
 The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
 And stared, with his foot on the prey,
 And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung many songs,
 But never a one so gay,
 For he sings of what the world will be
 When the years have died away.'

THE TALKING OAK

Once more the gate behind me falls;
 Once more before my face
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
 That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
 Beneath its drift of smoke;
 And ah! with what delighted eyes
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
 Ere that, which in me burn'd,
 The love, that makes me thrice a man,
 Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field
 I spoke without restraint,
 And with a larger faith appeal'd
 Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
 And told him of my choice,
 Until he plagiarised a heart,
 And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven
 None else could understand;
 I found him garrulously given,
 A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
 Is many a weary hour;
 'Twere well to question him, and try
 If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
 Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
 Whose topmost branches can discern
 The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
 If ever maid or spouse,
 As fair as my Olivia, came
 To rest beneath thy boughs.—

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here
 Whatever maiden grace
 The good old Summers, year by year
 Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

'Old Summers, when the monk was fat
 And, issuing shorn and sleek,
 Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
 The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
 And number'd bead, and shrift,
 Bluff Harry broke into the spence¹
 And turn'd the cowls adrift:

'And I have seen some score of those
 Fresh faces, that would thrive
 When his man-minded offset² rose
 To chase the deer at five;

'And all that from the town would stroll,
 Till that wild wind made work
 In which the gloomy brewer's soul³
 Went by me, like a stork:

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
 And others, passing praise,
 Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
 For puritanic stays:

'And I have shadow'd many a group
 Of beauties, that were born
 In teacup-times of hood and hoop,⁴
 Or while the patch was worn;

¹The monastic buttery or larder.

²Queen Elizabeth, *offset* meaning child.

³Oliver Cromwell. Storks are said to have left England at the end of the Commonwealth.

⁴This line describes the feminine fashions of the time of Queen Anne.

'And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the greens
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
(And hear me with thine ears,)
That, tho' I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass:

'For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh.'

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

'O yesterday, you know the fair
 Was holden at the town;
 Her father left his good arm-chair,
 And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.
 I look'd at him with joy:
 As cowslip unto oxslip is,
 So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past—and, sitting straight
 Within the low wheel'd chaise,
 Her mother trundled to the gate
 Behind the dappled grays.

'But as for her, she stay'd at home,
 And on the roof she went,
 And down the way you use to come,
 She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half-uncut
 Upon the rosewood shelf;
 She left the new piano shut:
 She could not please herself.

'Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
 And livelier than a lark
 She sent her voice thro' all the holt
 Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,
 And in the chase grew wild,
 As close as might be would he cling
 About the darling child:

'But light as any wind that blows
 So fleetly did she stir,
 The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,
 And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me play'd,
 And sang to me the whole
 Of those three stanzas that you made
 About my "giant bole";

'And in a fit of frolic mirth
 She strove to span my waist:
 Alas, I was so broad of girth,
 I could not be embraced.

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech
 That here beside me stands,
 That round me, clasping each in each,
 She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet
 As woodbine's fragile hold,
 Or when I feel about my feet
 The berried briony fold.'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
 And shadow Sumner-chace!
 Long may thy topmost branch discern
 The roofs of Sumner-place!

But tell me, did she read the name
 I carved with many vows
 When last with throbbing heart I came
 To rest beneath thy boughs?

'O yes, she wander'd round and round
 These knotted knees of mine,
 And found, and kiss'd the name she found,
 And sweetly murmur'd thine.

'A teardrop trembled from its source,
 And down my surface crept.
 My sense of touch is something coarse,
 But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,
 She glanced across the plain;
 But not a creature was in sight:
 She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind,
 That, trust me on my word,
 Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
 But yet my sap was stirr'd:

'And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

'I, rooted here among the groves
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust:

'For ah! my friend, the days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

' 'Tis little more: the day was warm;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.
 I breathed upon her eyes
 Thro' all the summer of my leaves
 A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of life—
 The music from the town—
 The murmurs of the drum and fife
 And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
 To light her shaded eye;
 A second flutter'd round her lip
 Like a golden butterfly;

'A third would glimmer on her neck
 To make the necklace shine;
 Another slid, a sunny fleck,
 From head to ankle fine,

'Then close and dark my arms I spread,
 And shadow'd all her rest—
 Dropt dew upon her golden head,
 An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,
 And pluck'd it out, and drew
 My little oakling from the cup,
 And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift—
 I felt a pang within
 As when I see the woodman lift
 His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was
 The finest on the tree.
 He lies beside thee on the grass.
 O kiss him once for me.

'O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
 That have no lips to kiss,
 For never yet was oak on lea
 Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
 Look further thro' the chace,
 Spread upward till thy boughs discern
 The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
 That but a moment lay
 Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
 Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
 The warmth it thence shall win
 To riper life may magnetise
 The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
 Or lapse from hand to hand,
 Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
 Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
 Nor wielded axe disjoint,
 That art the fairest-spoken tree
 From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top
 All throats that gurgle sweet!
 All starry culmination drop
 Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—
 And while he sinks or swells
 The full south-breeze around thee blow
 The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
 That under deeply strikes!
 The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
 High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
 But, rolling as in sleep,
 Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
 That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball,
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,¹

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honours that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O plump head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port:
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew late
On Lusitanian² summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,

¹According to an ancient Greek legend, a mystic dove flew from Egypt to Thessaly where, seated in an oak tree, it announced the foundation of the famous oracle of Zeus at Dodona.

²*Lusitania* is the classical name for Portugal.

To make me write my random rhymes,
 Ere they be half-forgotten;¹
 Nor add and alter, many times,
 Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
 Her laurel in the wine,
 And lays it thrice upon my lips,
 These favour'd lips of mine;
 Until the charm have power to make
 New lifeblood warm the bosom,
 And barren commonplaces break
 In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
 Her gradual fingers steal
 And touch upon the master-chord
 Of all I felt and feel.
 Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
 And phantom hopes assemble;
 And that child's heart within the man's
 Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
 By many pleasant ways,
 Against its fountain upward runs
 The current of my days:
 I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;
 The gas-light wavers dimmer;
 And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
 My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
 Unboding critic-pen,
 Or that eternal want of pence,
 Which vexes public men,
 Who hold their hands to all, and cry
 For that which all deny them—
 Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
 And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
 Tho' fortune clip my wings,
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take
 Half-views of men and things.

¹Tennyson, being very short-sighted, disliked the labour of writing out his poems, and some were forgotten without ever having been put on paper.

Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
 There must be stormy weather;
 But for some true result of good
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
 If old things, there are new;
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
 Yet glimpses of the true.
 Let raffs¹ be rife in prose and rhyme,
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,
 As on this whirligig of Time
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;
 With fair horizons bound:
 This whole wide earth of light and shade
 Comes out a perfect round.
 High over roaring Temple-bar,
 And set in Heaven's third story,
 I look at all things as they are,
 But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest
 Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
 The pint, you brought me, was the best
 That ever came from pipe.
 But tho' the port surpasses praise,
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
 Is there some magic in the place?
 Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,
 No pint of white or red
 Had ever half the power to turn
 This wheel within my head,
 Which bears a season'd brain about,
 Unsubject to confusion,
 Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
 With many kinsmen gay,
 Where long and largely we carouse
 As who shall say me nay:

¹Scraps.

Each month, a birth-day coming on,
 We drink defying trouble,
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,
 And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
 Had relish fiery-new,
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
 As old as Waterloo;
 Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,¹
 In musty bins and chambers,
 Had cast upon its crusty side
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!
 She answer'd to my call,
 She changes with that mood or this,
 Is all-in-all to all:
 She lit the spark within my throat,
 To make my blood run quicker,
 Used all her fiery will, and smote
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
 The waiter's hands, that reach
 To each his perfect pint of stout,
 His proper chop to each.
 He looks not like the common breed
 That with the napkin daily;
 I think he came like Ganymede,²
 From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
 Than modern poultry drop,
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,
 And cram'm'd a plumper crop;
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
 Crow'd lustier late and early,
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,³
 And raked in golden barley.

¹In 1827. This suggests that the poem was written about 1837.

²In Greek legend *Ganymede* was a beautiful boy, son of the King of Troy. Zeus sent his eagle to carry him up to Olympus where he became cup-bearer to the gods.

³Birds are said to be praising God when they throw up their heads in drinking.

A private life was all his joy,
 Till in a court he saw
 A something-pottle-bodied boy
 That knuckled at the taw:

He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,
 Flew over roof and casement:
 His brothers of the weather stood
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
 And follow'd with acclaims,
 A sign to many a staring shire
 Came crowing over Thames.
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
 Till, where the street grows straiter,
 One fix'd for ever at the door,
 And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go?
 How out of place she makes
 The violet of a legend blow
 Among the chops and steaks!
 'Tis but a steward of the can,
 One shade more plump than common;
 As just and mere a serving-man
 As any born of woman.

I ranged too high: what draws me down
 Into the common day?
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,
 Which I shall have to pay?
 For, something duller than at first,
 Nor wholly comfortable,
 I sit, my empty glass reversed,
 And thrumming on the table:

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
 I take myself to task;
 Lest of the fulness of my life
 I leave an empty flask:
 For I had hope, by something rare,
 To prove myself a poet:
 But, while I plan and plan, my hair
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
 Till they be gather'd up;
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,
 Will haunt the vacant cup:
 And others' follies teach us not,
 Nor much their wisdom teaches;
 And most, of sterling worth, is what
 Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!
 We know not what we know.
 But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone;
 'Tis gone, and let it go.
 'Tis gone: a thousand such have slipt
 Away from my embraces,
 And fall'n into the dusty crypt
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thoul thy betters went
 Long since, and came no more;
 With peals of genial clamour sent
 From many a tavern-door,
 With twisted quirks and happy hits,
 From misty men of letters;
 The tavern-hours of mighty wits—
 Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
 Had yet their native glow:
 Nor yet the fear of little books
 Had made him talk for show;
 But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
 He flash'd his random speeches,
 Ere days, that deal in ana,¹ swarm'd
 His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
 Like all good things on earth!
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
 At half thy real worth?
 I hold it good, good things should pass:
 With time I will not quarrel:
 It is but yonder empty glass
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

¹The suffix appears in such words as *Shakespeariana*, *Burnsiana*.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
 To which I most resort,
 I too must part: I hold thee dear
 For this good pint of port.
 For this, thou shalt from all things suck
 Marrow of mirth and laughter;
 And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
 The sphere thy fate allots:
 Thy latter days increased with pence
 Go down among the pots:
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
 In haunts of hungry sinners,
 Old boxes,¹ larded with the steam
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
 Would quarrel with our lot;
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
 To serve the hot-and-hot;
 To come and go, and come again,
 Returning like the pewit,
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
 The thick-set hazel dies;
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
 The corners of thine eyes:
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest
 Our changeful equinoxes,
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
 Shall call thee from the boxes.¹

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
 To pace the gritted floor,
 And, laying down an unctuous lease
 Of life, shalt earn no more;
 No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
 Shall show thee past to Heaven:
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
 A pint-pot neatly graven.

¹The partitioned spaces in which the tables were set in old eating houses,
 as they still are in the Cock Tavern in Fleet Street.

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 Of me you shall not win renown:
 You thought to break a country heart
 For pastime, ere you went to town.
 At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
 I saw the snare, and I retired:
 The daughter of a hundred Earls,
 You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 I know you proud to bear your name,
 Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
 Too proud to care from whence I came,
 Nor would I break for your sweet sake
 A heart that doats on truer charms.
 A simple maiden in her flower
 Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 Some meeker pupil you must find,
 For were you queen of all that is,
 I could not stoop to such a mind.
 You sought to prove how I could love,
 And my disdain is my reply.
 The lion on your cold stone gates
 Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 You put strange memories in my head.
 Not thrice your branching limes have blown
 Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
 Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies:
 A great enchantress you may be;
 But there was that across his throat
 Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 When thus he met his mother's view,
 She had the passions of her kind,
 She spake some certain truths of you.
 Indeed I heard one bitter word
 That scarce is fit for you to hear;
 Her manners had not that repose
 Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 There stands a spectre in your hall:
 The guilt of blood is at your door:
 You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
 You held your course without remorse,
 To make him trust his modest worth,
 And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
 And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
 From yon blue heavens above us bent
 The gardener Adam and his wife
 Smile at the claims of long descent.
 Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
 'Tis only noble to be good.
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,
 And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
 You pine among your halls and towers:
 The languid light of your proud eyes
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.
 In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
 But sickening of a vague disease,
 You know so ill to deal with time,
 You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
 If time be heavy on your hands,
 Are there no beggars at your gate,
 Nor any poor about your lands?
 Oh, teach the orphan-boy to read,
 Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
 Pray heaven for a human heart,
 And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE BLACKBIRD

O blackbird! sing me something well:
 While all the neighbours shoot thee round,
 I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
 Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
 Are thine; the range of lawn and park:
 The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
 All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
 Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
 With that gold dagger of thy bill
 To fret the summer jenneting.¹

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
 Cold February loved, is dry:
 Plenty corrupts the melody
 That made thee famous once, when young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,
 Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
 I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
 As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
 While yon sun prospers in the blue,
 Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
 Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

A FAREWELL.²

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
 Thy tribute wave deliver:
 No more by thee my steps shall be,
 For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
 A rivulet then a river:
 No where by thee my steps shall be,
 For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
 And here thine aspen shiver;
 And here by thee will hum the bee,
 For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
 A thousand moons will quiver;
 But not by thee my steps shall be,
 For ever and for ever

¹The name of an early apple.

²This poem was written to the Somersby Brook when the Tennysons were leaving the Rectory for High Beech, Epping. (See Introduction, page 28.)

WEDDING EVE

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow:
From fringes of the faded eve,
O, happy planet, eastward go;
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
Thy silver sister-world,¹ and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Listen! bells in yonder town,
Lin, lan, lone,
Over dale and over down,
Lin, lan, lone,
Now the year is almost gone,
Lin, lan, lone,
Dying, dying, almost gone.
Lin, lan, lone,
Almost, almost, almost gone.

Listen how the bells begin,
With a lin, lan, lin,
For the old year out and the new year in,
With a lin-lan-lan and a lan-lan-lin,
And the old year out and the new year in,
With a clash and a lin-lan-lin.

Put out the lights and let us go to bed,
The baby year is born, his father's dead,
And, settling back after that storm of sound,
From all the starry circle overhead
Hard silence drops upon the stony ground.

written probably before 1842

first published 1931

¹The Moon.

GODIVA

*I waited for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires; and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this:—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtax'd; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry: for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamouring, 'If we pay, we starve!'—
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax, they starve.'
Whereat he stared, replying, half amazed,
'You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these*?—'But I would die,' said she.
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul:
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear;
'Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk!'—'Alas!' she said,
'But prove me what it is I would not do.'
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the town,
And I repeal it;' and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition; but that she would loose
The people: therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclass'd the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath

She linger'd, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud: anon she shook her head,
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee;
Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair
Stole on; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd
The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapt
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity:
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see: the barking cur
Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors thro' her pulses: the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared, but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flower'd eldér-thicket from the field
Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity:
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes before they had their will,
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused;
And she, that knew not, pass'd: and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,
One after one: but even then she gain'd
Her bower; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away
And built herself an everlasting name.

LOVE AND DUTY

Of love that never found his earthly close,¹
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?
Or all the same as if he had not been?

¹The first ten lines may be paraphrased as follows: Error leads to the discovery of Truth; Revolution to Constitutional freedom; Sin (through repentance) to Virtue. Are we to believe that Love, the wonder of the world, alone of all good things ends in dust and ashes?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time
Still father Truth? O shall the braggart shout
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself
Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law
System and empire? Sin itself be found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?
And only he, this wonder, dead, become
Mere highway dust? or year by year alone
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,
The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?
O three times less unworthy! likewise thou
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy years.
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

Will some one say, 'Then why not ill for good?
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man
My work shall answer, since I knew the right
And did it; for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a man.
—So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,
When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears, would dwell
One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
Then not to dare to see! when thy low voice,
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,
And on thy bosom (deep desired relief!)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!

For Love himself took part against himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—
O this world's curse,—beloved but hated—came
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,
And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy bride,'
She push'd me from thee.

/

If the sense is hard

To alien ears, I did not speak to these—
 No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:
 Hard is my doom and thine: thou knowest it all.
 Could Love part thus? was it not well to speak,
 To have spoken once? It could not but be well.
 The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,
 The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
 And all good things from evil, brought the night
 In which we sat together and alone,
 And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,
 Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
 That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears
 As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way

To those caresses, when a hundred times
 In that last kiss, which never was the last,
 Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
 Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words
 That make a man feel strong in speaking truth;
 Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
 The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
 In that brief night; the summer night, that paused
 Among her stars to hear us; stars that hung
 Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels of Time
 Spun round in station, but the end had come.

O then like those, who clench their nerves to rush
 Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
 There—closing like an individual life—
 In one blind cry of passion and of pain,
 Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
 Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,
 And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—

Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
 Life needs for life is possible to will—
 Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tended by
 My blessing! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts
 Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou
 For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,
 If not to be forgotten—not at once—
 Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,
 O might it come like one that looks content,
 With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
 And point thee forward to a distant light,
 Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
 And leave thee freer, till thou wake refresh'd

Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown
Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of pearl
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE

O Lady Flora, let me speak:
A pleasant hour has passed away
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
As by the lattice you reclined,
I went thro' many wayward moods
To see you dreaming—and, behind,
A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dream'd, until at last
Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
And loosely settled into form.
And would you have the thought I had,
And see the vision that I saw,
Then take the broidery-frame, and add
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,
And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—
The rhymes are dazzled from their place
And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE

I

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

¹*The Sleeping Beauty* was published in 1830, the remainder of the poem being added later and published in 1842. The *Moral* and *Epilogue* give the old story a contemporary reference, picking up the idea touched on in stanza 7 of *The Sleeping Palace*.

2

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
 On every slanting terrace-lawn.
 The fountain to his place returns
 Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
 Here droops the banner on the tower,
 On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
 The peacock in his laurel bower,
 The parrot in his gilded wires.

3

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs;
 In these, in those the life is stay'd.
 The mantles from the golden pegs
 Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
 Not even of a gnat that sings.
 More like a picture seemeth all
 Than those old portraits of old kings,
 That watch the sleepers from the wall.

4

Here sits the Butler with a flask
 Between his knees, half-drain'd; and there
 The wrinkled steward at his task,
 The maid-of-honour blooming fair;
 The page has caught her hand in his:
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak:
 His own are pouted to a kiss:
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

5

Till all the hundred summers pass,
 The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
 Make prisms in every carven glass
 And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
 Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
 His state the king reposing keeps.
 He must have been a jovial king.

6

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
 At distance like a little wood;
 Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
 And grapes with bunches red as blood;

All creeping plants, a wall of green
 Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,
 And glimpsing over these, just seen,
 High up, the topmost palace spire.

?

When will the hundred summers die,
 And thought and time be born again,
 And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
 Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
 Here all things in their place remain,
 As all were order'd, ages since.
 Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
 And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

1

Year after year unto her feet,
 She lying on her couch alone,
 Across the purple coverlet,
 'The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
 On either side her tranced form
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
 And moves not on the rounded curl.

2

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould
 Languidly ever; and, amid
 Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
 With bracelets of the diamond brigh:
 Her constant beauty doth inform
 Stillness with love, and day with light.

3

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
 In palace chambers far apart.
 The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
 That lie upon her charmed heart.
 She sleeps: on either hand upswells
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL

I

All precious things, discover'd late,
 To those that seek them issue forth;
 For love in sequel works with fate,
 And draws the veil from hidden worth.
 He travels far from other skies—
 His mantle glitters on the rocks—
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

2

The bodies and the bones of those
 That strove in other days to pass,
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
 He gazes on the silent dead:
 'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,
 'The many fail: the one succeeds.'

3

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
 He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
 The colour flies into his cheeks:
 He trusts to light on something fair;
 For all his life the charm did talk
 About his path, and hover near
 With words of promise in his walk,
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

4

More close and close his footsteps wind:
 The Magic Music in his heart
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find
 The quiet chamber far apart.
 His spirit flutters like a lark,
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
 'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
 How dark those hidden eyes must be!'

THE REVIVAL

I

A touch, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
 A fuller light illumined all,
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

2

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

3

And last with these the king awoke,
 And in his chair himself uprear'd,
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
 'By holy rood, a royal beard!
 How say you? we have slept, my lords.
 My beard has grown into my lap.'
 The barons swore, with many words,
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

4

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still
 My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill
 I mention'd half an hour ago?'
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,
 In courteous words return'd reply:
 But dallied with his golden chain,
 And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE

I

And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

2

'I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss;'
'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

3

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!'
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!'
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!'
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!'
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

4

'A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me where?'
'O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there.'
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL

I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And if you find no moral there,
 Go, look in any glass and say,
 What moral is in being fair.
 Oh, to what uses shall we put
 The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
 And is there any moral shut
 Within the bosom of the rose?

2

But any man that walks the mead,
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
 According as his humours lead,
 A meaning suited to his mind.
 And liberal applications lie
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
 Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI

I

You shake your head. A random string
 Your finer female sense offends.
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;
 To pass with all our social ties
 To silence from the paths of men;
 And every hundred years to rise
 And learn the world, and sleep again;
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
 And wake on science grown to more,
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,
 As wild as aught of fairy lore;
 And all that else the years will show,
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
 The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the Powers;
 Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes;
 For we are Ancients of the earth,
 And in the morning of the times.

2

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
 Thro' sunny decads new and strange,
 Or gay quinquenniads would we reap
 The flower and quintessence of change.

3

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!
 So much your eyes my fancy take—
 Be still the first to leap to light
 That I might kiss those eyes awake!
 For, am I right, or am I wrong,
 To choose your own you did not care;
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,
 And I will take my pleasure there:
 And, am I right or am I wrong,
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
 To search a meaning for the song,
 Perforce will still revert to you;
 Nor finds a closer truth than this
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
 And evermore a costly kiss
 The prelude to some brighter world.

For since the time when Adam first
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
 And every bird of Eden burst
 In carol, every bud to flower,
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes,
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd?
 Where on the double rosebud droops
 The fulness of the pensive mind;
 Which all too dearly self-involved,
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,
 That lets thee neither hear nor see:
 But break it. In the name of wife,
 And in the rights that name may give,
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
 And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
‘What wonder, if he thinks me fair?’
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight
Like long-tail’d birds of Paradise
That float thro’ Heaven, and cannot light?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.

1830-1842

English Idylls

THE EPIC¹

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held a talk,
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at Geology² and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,
And none abroad: there was no anchor, none,
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way
At college: but another which you had,
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
What came of that?' 'You know,' said Frank, 'he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—
And then to me demanding why? 'Oh, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:
God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.
It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said Hall,

¹See Introduction, page 30, regarding the "English Idylls". In the *Morte d'Arthur* to which *The Epic* serves as a Prologue, Tennyson followed fairly closely Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (bk. 21, ch. 4-5). The Prologue and Epilogue exemplify Tennyson's practice of attempting to relate old legends to contemporary life. They suggest that he had been intending to complete an *Arthurian Epic* in twelve books, the last of which would have described the King's second coming.

²Recent discoveries in geology had cast serious doubt on the hitherto accepted chronology of the Bible story of the Creation, etc.

'Why take the style of those heroic times?
 For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
 Nor we those times; and why should any man
 Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
 Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' 'But I,'
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth
 And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame
 When we were Freshmen: then at my request
 He brought it; and the poet little urged,
 But with some prelude of disparagement,
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and ses,
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
 Among the mountains by the winter sea;
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
 Had fallen in Lyonesse¹ about their Lord,
 King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
 'The sequel of today unsolders all
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
 Shall never more, at any future time,
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
 Walking about the gardens and the halls
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
 I perish by this people which I made,—
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
 To rule once more—but let what will be, be,

¹A legendary land supposed to have lain south and west of Cornwall and to be now submerged by the sea.

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite¹, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,

¹A silk material inwoven with gold and silver threads.

And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
 'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
 Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
 As thou art lief¹ and dear, and do the thing
 I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
 His palms together, and he cried aloud,
 'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
 Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
 What good should follow this, if this were done?
 What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
 An act unprofitable, against himself?
 The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
 What record, or what relic of my lord
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
 And rumours of a doubt? but were th's kept,
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings.
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
 Saying "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime
 To all the people, winning reverence.
 But now much honour and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
 And hid Excalibur the second time,
 And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
 Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
 'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
 'I heard the water lapping on the crag,

¹Beloved.

And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,¹
Seen where the moving isles of winter² shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

¹Aurora Borealis.

²Icebergs.

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
 And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against his brow
 Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
 And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
 And all his greaves and cuisses¹ dash'd with drops
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
 That made his forehead like a rising sun
 High from the daïs-throne—were parch'd with dust;
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
 So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
 'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
 For now I see the true old times are dead,
 When every morning brought a noble chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.
 Such times have been not since the light that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
 Which was an image of the mighty world;
 And I, the last, go forth, companionless,
 And the days darken round me, and the years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
 'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
 And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
 Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done
 May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
 For what are men better than sheep or goats
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
 For so the whole round earth is every way

¹Leg and thigh armour.

Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a long way
 With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
 To the island-valley of Avilion;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
 'That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
 Revolving many memories, till the hull
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
 Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell:
 At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
 And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!' but we
 Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—
 Perhaps some modern touches here and there
 Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—
 Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
 I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
 'The cock crew loud; as at that time of year
 The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
 'There now—that's nothing!' drew a little back,
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
 'That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:
 And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd
 To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
 Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
 To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
 There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
 Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
 'Arthur is come again: he cannot die.'
 Then those that stood upon the hills behind
 Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair;'

And, further inland, voices echo'd—'Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more.'
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

1842

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER;

OR, THE PICTURES

This morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh she
To me myself, for some three careless moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,
And said to me, she sitting with us then,
'When will *you* paint like this?' and I replied,
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)
'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love, unperceived,
A more ideal Artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.'
And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see
The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after that,
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece.'
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it

In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
 And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
 The windy clanging of the minster clock;
 Although between it and the garden lies
 A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
 That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
 Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
 Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
 Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between
 Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,
 And all about the large lime feathers low,
 The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
 Grew, seldom seen; not less among us lived
 Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard
 Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was he,
 So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
 At such a distance from his youth in grief,
 That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,
 So gross to express delight, in praise of her
 Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
 And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
 Would play with flying forms and images,
 Yet this is also true, that, long before
 I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
 My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
 And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
 That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,
 Born out of everything I heard and saw,
 Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
 And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
 To one that travels quickly, made the air
 Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
 That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream
 Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,
 Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds
 For ever in itself the day we went
 To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
 Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
 Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
 Drew downward: but all else of heaven was pure
 Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
 And May with me from head to heel. And now,
 As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were

The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,
 (For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)
 Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
 And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,
 Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,
 And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
 Came voices of the well-contented doves.
 The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
 But shook his song together as he near'd
 His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
 The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
 The mellow ouzel¹ fluted in the elm;
 The redcap² whistled; and the nightingale
 Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,
 'Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,
 These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing
 Like poets, from the vanity of song?
 Or have they any sense of why they sing?
 And would they praise the heavens for what they have?'
 And I made answer. 'Were there nothing else
 For which to praise the heavens but only love,
 That only love were cause enough for praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,
 And on we went, but ere an hour had pass'd,
 We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North;
 Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
 To one green wicket in a privet hedge;
 This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
 Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;
 And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
 Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
 The garden stretches southward. In the midst
 A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
 The garden-glasses glanced, and momentarily
 The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps the house.'
 He nodded, but a moment afterwards
 He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he ceased I turn'd,
 And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
 That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,
 And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
 Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
 Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,

¹Blackbird.

²Goldfinch.

A single stream of all her soft brown hair
 Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the flowers
 Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
 Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering down,
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced
 The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
 And mix'd with shadows of the common ground!
 But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,
 And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
 And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
 As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
 She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a Rose
 In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
 Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd
 Into the world without; till close at hand,
 And almost ere I knew mine own intent,
 This murmur broke the stillness of that air
 Which brooded round about her:

'Ah, one rose,
 One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,
 Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips
 Less exquisite than thine.'

She look'd: but all
 Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd
 Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
 Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,
 And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound
 Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips
 For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,
 Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
 And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
 In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,
 Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there
 Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star
 Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way
 With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
 'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the top of Art.
 You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
 The Titianic Flora. Will you match
 My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master, Love,
 A more ideal Artist he than all.'

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,

Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
And shaping faithful record of the glance
That graced the giving—such a noise of life
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.
And all that night I heard the watchman peal
The sliding season: all that night I heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odours on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.
Light pretexts drew me; sometimes a Dutch love
For tulips, then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city rooms; or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm; and more and more
A word could bring the colour to my cheek;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd;
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touch'd with some new grace
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I will,'
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds: but I rose up
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows: from them clash'd
The bells; we listen'd; with the time we play'd,

We spoke of other things; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am thine.'

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full
How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,
Holding the folded annals of my youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,
And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, 'Be wise: not easily forgiven
Are those, who setting wide the doors that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
Let in the day.' Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell
Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of vows,
And kisses, 'where the heart on one wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent
On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds
May not be dwelt on by the common day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul;
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes: the time
Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

1842

DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought, 'I'll make them man and wife.'
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd toward William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said, 'My son:
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years.' But William answer'd short;
'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands and said:
'You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus?
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
Consider, William: take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made you, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again.'
But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,

And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
His niece and said: 'My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
'It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!'

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:

'I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'

And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took

The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
 And made a little wreath of all the flowers
 That grew about, and tied it round his hat
 To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
 Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
 He spied her, and he left his men at work,
 And came and said: 'Where were you yesterday?
 Whose child is that? What are you doing here?'
 So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
 And answer'd softly, 'This is William's child!
 'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not
 Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again:
 'Do with me as you will, but take the child,
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!
 And Allan said, 'I see it is a trick
 Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
 I must be taught my duty, and by you!
 You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
 To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
 But go you hence, and never see me more.'
 So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud
 And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
 At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
 And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
 More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
 Remembering the day when first she came,
 And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
 And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
 Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
 Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
 To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
 And Dora said, 'My uncle took the boy;
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
 He says that he will never see me more.'
 Then answer'd Mary, 'This shall never be,
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
 And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
 For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
 His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
 And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
 And I will beg of him to take thee back:
 But if he will not take thee back again,
 Then thou and I will live within one house,
 And work for William's child, until he grows
 Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him: and the lad stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in: but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her:
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:

'O Father!—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
"God bless him!" he said, "and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before.'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—

'I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my
son.

I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundredfold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child
Thinking of William.

So those four abode
Within one house together; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

AUDLEY COURT

'The Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room
For love or money. Let us picnic there
At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast
Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the boat,
And breathing of the sea. 'With all my heart,'
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,
And rounded by the stillness of the beach
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all
The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,
With all its casements bedded, and its walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and ate
And talk'd old matters over; who was dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and how
The races went, and who would rent the hall:
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was
This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,
The four-field system, and the price of grain;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where 'we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—
'Oh! who would fight and march and countermarch,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into some bloody trench
Where no one knows? but let me live my life.
'Oh! who would cast and balance at a desk,
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

'Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands;
'The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.'

'Oh! who would love? I woo'd a woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea; but let me live my life.'

He sang his song, and I replied with mine:
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,
His books—the more the pity, so I said—
Came to the hammer here in March—and this—
I set the words, and added names I knew.

'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast:
Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:
I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.

'I go, but I return: I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.'

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,
The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,
My friend; and I, that having wherewithal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,
Did what I would; but ere the night we rose
And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
The limit of the hills; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,
The town was hush'd beneath us: lower down
The bay was oily calm; the harbour-buoy,
Sole star of phosphorescence¹ in the calm,
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

1842

¹Coming home one evening at Torquay, Tennyson saw a little *star of phosphorescence* made by the buoy in the water.

WALKING TO THE MAIL

JOHN. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.
Is yon plantation where this byway joins
The turnpike?

JAMES. Yes.

JOHN. And when does this come by?

JAMES. The mail? At one o'clock.

JOHN. What is it now?

JAMES. A quarter to.

JOHN. Whose house is that I see?

No, not the County Member's with the vane:
Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half
A score of gables.

JAMES. That? Sir Edward Head's:

But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

JOHN. Oh, his. He was not broken.

JAMES.

No, sir, he,

Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood
'That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face
From all men, and commercing with himself,
He lost the sense that handles daily life—
That keeps us all in order more or less—
And sick of home went overseas for change.

JOHN. And whither?

JAMES. Nay, who knows? he's here and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with him,
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

JOHN. What's that?

JAMES. You saw the man—on Monday, was it?—
There by the humpback'd willow; half stands up
And bristles; half has fall'n and made a bridge;
And there he caught the younker tickling trout—
Caught in *flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—
Delicto: but his house, for so they say,
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook
'The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,
And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:
'The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,
And all his household stuff; and with his boy
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, 'What!
You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,' says the ghost
(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds),
'Oh well,' says he, 'you flitting with us too—'

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again.'

JOHN. *He left his wife behind; for so I heard.*

JAMES. He left her, yes. I met my lady once:
A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

JOHN. Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—
"Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—
You could not light upon a sweeter thing:
A body slight and round, and like a pear
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin
As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

JAMES. Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved
At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.
She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,
New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd
To what she is: a nature never kind!
Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they say:
Kind nature is the best: those manners next
That fit us like a nature second-hand;
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

JOHN. But I had heard it was this bill that past,¹
And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

JAMES. That was the last drop in the cup of gall.
I once was near him, when his bailiff brought
A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince
As from a venomous thing: he thought himself
A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry
Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs
Sweat on his blazon'd chairs; but, sir, you know
That these two parties still divide the world—
Of those that want, and those that have: and still
The same old sore breaks out from age to age
With much the same result. Now I myself,
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I would.
I was at school—a college in the South:
There lived a flayflint near: we stole his fruit,
His hens, his eggs; but there was law for us;
We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,
With meditative grunts of much content,
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.
By night we dragg'd her to the college tower
From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair
With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,

¹The Reform Bill of 1832.

And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she loved
As one by one we took them—but for this—
As never sow was higher in this world—
Might have been happy: but what lot is pure?
We took them all, till she was left alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

JOHN. They found you out?

JAMES.

Not they.

JOHN.

Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man?
His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who are sound,
That we should mimic this raw fool the world,
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To Pity—more from ignorance than will.
But put your best foot forward, or I fear
That we shall miss the mail: and here it comes
With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand
As you shall see—three pyebalds and a roan.

1842

THE GOLDEN YEAR¹

Well, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote:
It was last summer on a tour in Wales:
Old James was with me: we that day had been
Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leonard there,
And found him in Llanberis: then we crost
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way up
The counter side; and that same song of his
He told me; for I banter'd him, and swore
They said he lived shut up within himself,
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech, 'Give,²
Cram us with all,' but count not me the herd!

To which 'They call me what they will,' he said:
'But I was born too late: the fair new forms,

¹This poem was written at the time of the controversy about the repeal of the Corn Laws.

²The horse-leech hath two daughters crying, "Give, give." *Proverbs* XXX 15.

That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen, hear
These measured words, my work of yestermorn.

'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move;
The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun;
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse;
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

'Ah, tho' the times, when some new thought can bud,
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
Yet oceans daily gaining on the land,
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

'When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man
Thro' all the season of the golden year.

'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?
If all the world were falcons, what of that?
The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

'Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the Press;
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
Enrich the markets of the golden year.

'But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'

Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon
'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd James—
'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
'Tis like the second world to us that live:
'I were all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven
As on this vision of the golden year.'

With that he struck his staff against the rocks
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,

O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis:
Then added, all in heat:

'What stuff is this!
Old writers push'd the happy season back,—
The more fools they,—we forward: dreamers both:
You most, that in an age, when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge
His hand into the bag: but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors.'

He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
And buffet round the hills, from bluff to bluff.

1846

EDWIN MORRIS;

OR, THE LAKE

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth
Of city life! I was a sketcher then:
See here, my doing: curves of mountain, bridge,
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon a rock
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock:
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimnied bulk
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull
The curate; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,
Long learned names of agaric,¹ moss and fern,
Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he seem'd
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

¹A kind of fungus.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,
 And his first passion, and he answer'd me;
 And well his words became him: was he not
 A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence
 Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he spoke.

'My love for Nature is as old as I;
 But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,
 And three rich sennights more, my love for her.
 My love for Nature and my love for her,
 Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,
 Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
 To some full music rose and sank the sun,
 And some full music seem'd to move and change
 With all the varied changes of the dark,
 And either twilight and the day between;
 For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again
 Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet
 To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe.

Or this or something like to this he spoke.
 Then said the fat-faced curate Edward Bull,
 'I take it, God made the woman for the man,
 And for the good and increase of the world.
 A pretty face is well, and this is well,
 To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,
 And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways
 Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed
 Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.
 I say, God made the woman for the man,
 And for the good and increase of the world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe too low:
 But I have sudden touches, and can run
 My faith beyond my practice into his:
 Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
 I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
 I scarce have other music: yet say on.
 What should one give to light on such a dream?'
 I ask'd him half-sardonically.

'Give?
 Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a light
 Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;
 'I would have hid her needle in my heart,
 To save her little finger from a scratch
 No deeper than the skin: my ears could hear
 Her lightest breath; her least remark was worth

The experience of the wise. I went and came;
Her voice fled always thro' the summer land;
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days!
The flower of each, those moments when we met,
The crown of all, we met to part no more.'

Were not his words delicious, I a beast
To take them as I did? but something jarr'd;
Whether he spoke too largely; that there seem'd
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,
Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said:

'Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?¹
But you can talk: yours is a kindly vein:
I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much within;
Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,
That like a purple beech among the greens
Looks out of place: 'tis from no want in her:
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern mind
Dissecting passion. Time will set me right.'

'So spoke I knowing not the things that were.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:
'God made the woman for the use of man,
And for the good and increase of the world.'
And I and Edwin laughed; and now we paused
About the windings of the marge to hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms
And alders, garden-isles; and now we left
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.

¹The ancient Romans thought that a *sneeze* was a sign of good luck.

'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no more:
 She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,
 The close, 'Your Letty, only yours;' and this
 Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn
 Chung to the lake. I boated over, ran
 My craft aground, and heard with beating heart
 The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel;
 And out I stept, and up I crept: she moved,
 Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers:
 Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and she,
 She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed
 In some new planet: a silent cousin stole
 Upon us and departed: 'Leave,' she cried,
 'O leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never: here
 I brave the worst:' and while we stood like fools
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
 And poodles yell'd within, and out they came
 Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. 'What, with him!
 Go' (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus); 'him!
 I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen—'Him!
 Again with hands of wild rejection 'Go!—
 Girl, get you in!' She went—and in one month
 They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
 To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
 And educated whisker. But for me,
 They set an ancient creditor to work:
 It seems I broke a close with force and arms:
 There came a mystic token from the king
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!
 I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd:
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below:
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm;
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps: yet long ago
 I have pardon'd little Letty; not indeed,
 It may be, for her own dear sake but this,
 She seems a part of those fresh days to me;
 For in the dust and drouth of London life
 She moves among my visions of the lake,
 While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then
 While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
 The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

THE BROOK

Here, by this brook, we parted; I to the East
 And he for Italy—too late—too late:
 One whom the strong sons of the world despise;
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,
 And mellow metres more than cent for cent;
 Nor could he understand how money breeds,
 Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.
 O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we say,
 Of those that held their heads above the crowd,
 They flourish'd then or then; but life in him
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,
 When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
 And nothing perfect: yet the brook he loved,
 For which, in branding summers of Bengal,
 Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
 To me that loved him; for 'O brook,' he says,
 'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,
 'Whence come you?' and the brook, why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
 I make a sudden sally,
 And sparkle out among the fern,
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
 Or slip between the ridges,
 By twenty thorps, a little town,
 And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
 It has more ivy; there the river, and there
 Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
 In little sharps and trebles,
 I bubble into eddying bays,
 I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
 By many a field and fallow,
 And many a fairy foreland set
 With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird;
 Old Philip; all about the fields you caught
 His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
 High-elbowed grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
 With here a blossom sailing,
 And here and there a lusty trout,
 And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
 Upon me, as I travel
 With many a silvery waterbreak
 Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child!
 A maiden of our century, yet most meek;
 A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;
 Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;
 Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
 In gloss and 'hue the chestnut, when the shell
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
 Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
 James Willows, of one name and heart with her.
 For here I came, twenty years back—the week
 Before I parted with poor Edmund; crost
 By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam

Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
Stuck; and he clamour'd from a casement, "Run"
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran: she moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

'What was it? less of sentiment than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,¹
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why?
What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said.
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,
And sketching with her slender pointed foot
Some figure like a wizard pentagram,
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd
If James were coming. "Coming every day,"
She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;
And James departed vext with him and her."
How could I help her? "Would I—was it wrong?"
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)
"O would I take her father for one hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"
And even while she spoke, I saw where James
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
To show the farm: full willingly he rose:
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes

¹This is a metaphorical way of describing sentimental novels and poetry.

Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.
 He praised his land, his horses, his machines;
 He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;
 He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;
 His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
 Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:
 Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took
 Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,
 And naming those, his friends, for whom they were:
 Then crost the common into Darnley chase
 To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern
 Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
 Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
 He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:
 "That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire."
 And there he told a long long-winded tale
 Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,
 And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,
 And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
 To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,
 And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
 But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;
 He gave them line; and five days after that
 He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
 Who then and there had offer'd something more,
 But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;
 He knew the man; the colt would fetch its price;
 He gave them line: and how by chance at last
 (It might be May or April, he forgot,
 The last of April or the first of May)
 He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
 And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
 And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,
 Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.
 "Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,
 Poor fellow, could he help it? recommenced,
 And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
 Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,
 Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,
 Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
 Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
 And with me Philip, talking still; and so
 We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,
 And following our own shadows thrice as long
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,
 Arrived and found the sun of sweet content
 Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi¹; sleeps in peace: and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in April-autumns. All are gone.²

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
A tormented head in middle age forlorn,
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony-rings;
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within:
Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from the farm?
'Yes' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little: pardon me;
What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That were strange.
What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!' 'That is my name.'

¹The Cathedral at Florence was designed by *Brunelleschi*.

'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-perplext,
 That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he
 Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
 Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.
 Then looking at her; 'Too happy, fresh and fair,
 Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,
 To be the ghost of one who bore your name
 About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we came back.
 We bought the farm we tenanted before.
 Am I so like her? so they said on board.
 Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
 My mother, as it seems you did, the days
 That most she loves to talk of, come with me.
 My brother James is in the harvest-field:
 But she—you will be welcome—O, come in!'

1855

Dramatic Monologues

THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as
mine:

There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline:
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be:
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me?
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,
 And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-
 flowers;
 And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and
 hollows gray,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,
 And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;
 There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
 And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
 And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
 To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:
 To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

1832

NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
 For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
 It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
 Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
 The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind:
 And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see
 The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;
 Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of
 May;
 And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,
 Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'll caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight for ever-
more,

And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door;
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green:
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:
Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never garden more:
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother: call me before the day is born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

1832

CONCLUSION

I thought to pass away before, and yet alive I am;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!
But still I think it can't be long before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole long life, until he meet me there!
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet:
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's not for them: it's mine.'
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

1842

THE GRANDMOTHER

I

And Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.
And Willy's wife has written: she never was over-wise,
Never the wife for Willy: he wouldn't take my advice.

2

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,
 Hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.
 Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.
 Eh!—but he wouldn't hear me—and Willy, you say, is gone.

3

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;
 Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.
 'Here's a leg for a babe of a week!' says doctor; and he would
 be bound,
 There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.¹

4

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!
 I ought to have gone before him: I wonder he went so young.
 I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not long to stay;
 Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

5

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;
 But all my children have gone before me, I am so old:
 I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

6

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,
 All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.
 I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost me a world of woe,
 Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

7

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right
 well
 That Jenny had tript in her time: I knew, but I would not tell.
 And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!
 But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a
 fire.

8

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,
 That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,
 That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
 But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

¹The Somersby doctor said this of Alfred Tennyson when *a babe of a week*.

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES

9

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day;
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been!
But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself clean.

10

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late
I climb'd to the top of the 'garth, and stood by the road at the
gate.
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrup't the night-
ingale.

11

All of a sudden he stopt: there past by the gate of the farm,
Willy,—he didn't see me,—and Jenny hung on his arm.
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how;
Ah, there's no fool like the old one—it makes me angry now.

12

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant;
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtsy and went.
And I said, 'Let us part: in a hundred years it'll all be the same,
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name.'

13

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moon-
shine:
'Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill;
But marry me out of hand: we two shall be happy still.'

14

'Marry you, Willy!' said I, 'but I needs must speak my mind,
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind.'
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, 'No,
love, no.'
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

15

So Willy and I were wedded: I wore a lilac gown;
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

16

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife;
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his
life

17

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain:
I look'd at the still little body—his trouble had all been in vain.
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn:
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was
born.

18

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay:
Kind, like a man, was he; like a man, too, would have his way:
Never jealous—not he: we had many a happy year;
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seem'd so
near.

19

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have
died:
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget:
But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

20

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two:
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you:
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

21

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their
team:
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

22

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive;
For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five:
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten;
I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

23

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve;
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve:
And the neighbours come and laugh and gossip, and so do I;
I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

24

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad:
But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had;
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease;
And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

25

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,
And happy has been my life; but I would not live it again.
I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

26

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower;
But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour,—
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next;
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vexed?

27

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.
Get me my glasses, Annie: thank God that I keep my eyes.
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.
But stay with the old woman now: you cannot have long to
stay.

1859

TO ALFRED TENNYSON

MY GRANDSON

Golden-hair'd Ally whose name is one with mine,
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,
Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.
May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine!

THE FIRST QUARREL

(In the Isle of Wight)

I

'Wait a little,' you say, 'you are sure it'll all come right,'
But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks so wan an' so white:
Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I hadn't to wait for long.
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry.—No, no, you are doing me
wrong!

Harry and I were married: the boy can hold up his head,
The boy was born in wedlock, but after my man was dead;
I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an' I work an' I wait to
the end.

I am all alone in the world, an' you are my only friend.

2

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you the tale o' my life.
When Harry an' I were children, he call'd me his own little
wife;

I was happy when I was with him, an' sorry when he was
away,

An' when we play'd together, I loved him better than play;
He workt me the daisy chain—he made me the cowslip ball,
He fought the boys that were rude, an' I loved him better
than all.

Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at home in disgrace,
I never could quarrel with Harry—I had but to look in his
face.

3

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's kin, that had need
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he sent, an' the father agreed;
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire farm for years an'
for years;

I walked with him down to the quay, poor lad, an' we parted
in tears.

The boat was beginning to move, we heard them a-ringing
the bell,

'I'll never love any but you, God bless you, my own little
Nell.'

4

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he came to harm;
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with him up at the farm,

/

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES

One had deceived her an' left her alone with her sin an' her
shame,
And so she was wicked with Harry; the girl was the most to
blame.

5

And years went over till I that was little had grown so tall,
The men would say of the maids, 'Our Nelly's the flower of
'em all.'

I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught myself all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when Harry came home
for good.

6

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as happy too,
For I heard it abroad in the fields 'I'll never love any but
you';
'I'll never love any but you' the morning song of the lark,
'I'll never love any but you' the nightingale's hymn in the
dark.

7

And Harry came home at last, but he look'd at me sidelong
and shy,
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so many years had gone by,
I had grown so handsome and tall—that I might ha' forgot
him somehow—
For he thought—there were other lads—he was fear'd to look
at me now.

8

Hard was the frost in the field, we were married o' Christmas
day,
Married among the red berries, an' all as merry as May—
Those were the pleasant times, my house an' my man were
my pride,
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel a-sailing with wind an'
tide.

9

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he tried the villages round,
So Harry went over the Solent to see if work could be found;
An' he wrote 'I ha' six weeks' work, little wife, so far as I
know;
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss you before I go.'

10

So I set to righting the house, for wasn't he coming that day?
 An' I hit on an old deal-box that was push'd in a corner
 away,
 It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a letter along wi' the
 rest,
 I had better ha' put my naked hand in a hornet's nest.

11

'Sweetheart'—this was the letter—this was the letter I read—
 'You promised to find me work near you, an' I wish I was
 dead—
 Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you haven't done it, my lad,
 An' I almost died o' your going away, an I wish that I had.'

12

I too wish that I had—in the pleasant times that had past,
 Before I quarrell'd with Harry—*my* quarrel—the first an'
 the last.

13

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the letter that drove me
 wild,
 An' he told it me all at once, as simple as any child,
 'What can it matter, my lass, what I did wi' my single life?
 I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to his wife;
 An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst.' 'Then,' I said, 'I'm none o'
 the best.'
 An' he smiled at me, 'Aint you, my love? Come, come, little
 wife, let it rest!
 The man isn't like the woman, no need to make such a stir.'
 But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said 'You were keeping
 with her, '
 When I was a-loving you all along an' the same as before.'
 An' he didn't speak for a while an' he anger'd me more and
 more.
 Then he patted my hand in his gentle way, 'Let bygones be!
 'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said, 'when you married
 me!
 By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she*—in her shame an'
 her sin—
 You'll have her to nurse my child, if I die o' my lying in!

You'll make her its second mother! I hate her—an' I hate you!

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha' beaten me black an' blue

Than ha' spoken as kind as you did, when I were so crazy wi' spite,

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right.'

14

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I watch'd him, an' when he came in

I felt that my heart was hard, he was all wet thro' to the skin, An' I never said 'off wi' the wet,' I never said 'on wi' the dry,'

So I knew my heart was hard, when he came to bid me goodbye.

'You said that you hated me, Ellen, but that isn't true, you know;

I am going to leave you a bit—you'll kiss me before I go?'

15

'Going! you're going to her—kiss her—if you will,' I said—I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha' been light i' my head—

'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!' I didn't know well what I meant,

But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he turn'd *his* face an' he went.

16

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've gotten my work to do; You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I never loved any but you;

I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for what she wrote, I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-night by the boat.'

17

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought of him out at sea, An' I felt I had been to blame; he was always kind to me.

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right'—

An' the boat went down that night—the boat went down that night.

RIZPAH¹

17—

1

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother, come out to me.'
Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I cannot
go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at
the snow.

2

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the
down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of
the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drenched
with the rain.

3

Anything fallen again? nay—what was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones, I have
hidden them all.
What am I saying? and what are you? do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so must it lie.

4

Who let her in? how long has she been? you—what have you
heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their spies—
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my
eyes.

5

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should *you* know of the
night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost and the
fright?

¹Founded on a story, which Tennyson read in a penny magazine, of a poor woman whose son was hanged on the Brighton Downs for robbing the mail. She collected his bones as they fell from the gibbet in order to bury them secretly in Shoreham churchyard.

I have done it, while you were asleep—you were only made for
the day.

I have gather'd my baby together—and now you may go your
way.

6

Nay—for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit by an old dying wife,
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.

'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he never has told me a
lie.

I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he was but a
child—

'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said; he was always so wild—
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Willy—he never could
rest.

The King should have made him a soldier, he would have been
one of his best.

7

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would let
him be good;

They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore that he
would;

And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all was
done

He flung it among his fellows—I'll none of it, said my son.

8

I came into court to the Judge and the lawyers. I told them my
tale,

God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they kill'd him for
robbing the mail.

They hang'd him in chains for a show—we had always borne a
good name—

To be hang'd for a thief—and then put away—isn't that enough
shame?

Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at him, passing
by.

God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and horrible fowls of the
air,

But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him and hang'd
him there.

9

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last goodbye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. 'O mother!' I heard him
cry.

I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me away.

10

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up; they fasten'd me down on my
bed.

'Mother, O mother!' he call'd in the dark to me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that I couldn't
but hear;

And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid and still,
They let me abroad again—but the creatures had worked their
will.

11

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call it a
theft?—

My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that had
laughed and had cried—

Theirs? O no! they are mine—not theirs—they had moved in
my side.

12

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried
'em all—

I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the churchyard wall,
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'ill
sound,

But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

13

They would scratch him up—they would hang him again on the
cursed tree.

Sin? O yes—we are sinners, I know—let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good will toward men—
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'—let me hear it
again;

'Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffering.' Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder—the Saviour lives but to
bless.

He'll never put on the black cap except for the worst of the worst,
 And the first may be last—I have heard it in church—and the last may be first.
 Suffering—O long-suffering—yes, as the Lord must know,
 Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower and the snow.

14

Heard, have you? what? they had told you he never repented his sin.
 How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of his kin?
 Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs began,
 The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

15

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's all very well.
 But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in Hell.
 For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has look'd into my care,
 And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I know not where.

16

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire:
 Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?
 I have been with God in the dark—go, go you may leave me alone—
 You never have borne a child—you are just as hard as a stone.

17

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to be kind,
 But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice in the wind—
 The snow and the sky so bright—he used but to call in the dark,
 And he calls to me now from the church and not from the gibbet—for hark!
 Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—shaking the walls—
 Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Goodnight. I am going. He calls.

DESPAIR

A man and his wife having lost faith in a God, and hope of a life to come, resolve to end themselves by drowning. The woman is drowned, but the man rescued by a minister of the sect he had abandoned. See Introduction, page 46.

1

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel there looking over the sand?
Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd us, and drew me to land?

2

What did I feel that night? You are curious. How should I tell?
Does it matter so much what I felt? You rescued me—yet—
was it well

That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd, between me and the deep
and my doom,

Three days since, three more dark days of the Godless gloom
Of a life without sun, without health, without hope, without
any delight

In anything here upon earth? but ah God, that night, that night
When the rolling eyes of the lighthouse there on the fatal neck
Of land running out into rock—they had saved many hundreds
from wreck—

Glared on our way toward death, I remember I thought, as
we past,

Does it matter how many they saved? we are all of us wreck'd
at last—

'Do you fear?' and there came thro' the roar of a breaker a
whisper, a breath,

'Fear? am I not with you? I am frightened at life not death.'

3

And the suns of the limitless Universe sparkled and shone in
the sky,

Flashing with fires as of God, but we knew that their light was
a lie—

Bright as with deathless hope—but, however they sparkled and
shone,

The dark little worlds running round them were worlds of woe
like our own—

No soul in the heaven above, no soul on the earth below,
A fiery scroll written over with lamentation and woe.

4

See, we were nursed in the drear nightfold of your fatalist
creed,
And we turn'd to the growing dawn, we had hoped for a dawn
indeed,
When the light of a Sun that was coming would scatter the ghosts
of the Past,
And the cramping creeds that had madden'd the peoples would
vanish at last,
And we broke away from the Christ, our human brother and
friend,
For He spoke, or it seem'd that He spoke, of a Hell without help,
without end.

5

Hoped for a dawn and it came, but the promise had faded away;
We had past from a cheerless night to the glare of a drearier day;
He is only a cloud and a smoke who was once a pillar of fire,
The guess of a worm in the dust and the shadow of its desire—
Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the weak trodden down by
the strong,
Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre, murder, and wrong.

6

O we poor orphans of nothing—alone on that lonely shore—
Born of the brainless Nature who knew not that which she bore!
Trusting no longer that earthly flower would be heavenly fruit—
Come from the brute, poor souls—no souls—and to die with
the brute——

7

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity: I know you of old—
Small pity for those that have ranged from the narrow warmth
of your fold,
Where you bawl'd the dark side of your faith and a God of
eternal rage,
Till you flung us back on ourselves, and the human heart, and
the Age.

8

But pity—the Pagan held it a vice—was in her and in me,
Helpless, taking the place of the pitying God that should be!
Pity for all that aches in the grasp of an idiot power,
And pity for our own selves on an earth that bore not a flower;
Pity for all that suffers on land or in air or the deep,
And pity for our own selves till we long'd for eternal sleep.

9

'Lightly step over the sands! the waters—you hear them call!
Life with its anguish, and horrors, and errors—away with it all!
And she laid her hand in my own—she was always loyal and
sweet—

Till the points of the foam in the dusk came playing about our
feet.

There was a strong sea-current would sweep us out to the main.
'Ah God,' tho' I felt as I spoke I was taking the name in vain—
'Ah God,' and we turn'd to each other, we kiss'd, we embraced,
she and I,

Knowing the Love we were used to believe everlasting would die:
We had read their know-nothing books and we lean'd to the
darker side—

Ah God, should we find Him, perhaps, perhaps, if we died, if
we died;

We never had found Him on earth, this earth is a fatherless
Hell—

'Dear Love, for ever and ever, for ever and ever farewell,'
Never a cry so desolate, not since the world began,
Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the coming of man!

10

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and you saved me, a valueless
life.

Not a grain of gratitude mine! You have parted the man from
the wife.

I am left alone on the land, she is all alone in the sea;

If a curse meant ought, I would curse you for not having let
me be.

11

Visions of youth—for my brain was drunk with the water, it
seems;

I had past into perfect quiet at length out of pleasant dreams,
And the transient trouble of drowning—what was it when
match'd with the pains

Of the hellish heat of a wretched life rushing back thro' the
veins?

12

Why should I live? one son had forged on his father and fled,
And if I believed in a God, I would thank him, the other is
dead,

And there was a baby-girl, that had never look'd on the light:
Happiest she of us all, for she past from the night to the night.

13

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-born, her glory, her
boast,
Struck hard at the tender heart of the mother, and broke it
almost;
Tho', glory and shame dying out for ever in endless time,
Does it matter so much whether crown'd for a virtue, or hang'd
for a crime?

14

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood there, naked, amazed
In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd myself turning crazed,
And I would not be mock'd in a madhouse! and she, the delicate
wife,
With a grief that could only be cured, if cured, by the surgeon's
knife.—

15

Why should we bear with an hour of torture, a moment of pain,
If every man die for ever, if all his griefs are in vain,
And the homeless planet at length will be wheel'd thro' the
silence of space,
Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race,
When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its last brother-
worm will have fled
From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an earth
that is dead?

16

Have I crazed myself over their horrible infidel writings? O yes,
For these are the new dark ages, you see, of the popular press,
When the bat comes out of his cave, and the owls are whooping
at noon,
And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill and crows to the sun and
the moon,
Till the Sun and the Moon of our science are both of them
turn'd into blood,
And Hope will have broken her heart, running after a shadow
of good;
For their knowing and know-nothing books are scatter'd from
hand to hand—
We have knelt in your know-all chapel too looking over the sand.

17

What! I should call on that Infinite Love that has served us so
well?
Infinite cruelty rather that made everlasting Hell,

Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and does what he will
 with his own;
 Better out dead brute mother who never has heard us groan!

18

Hell? if the souls of men were immortal, as men have been told,
 The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and the miser would yearn
 for his gold,
 And so there were Hell for ever! but were there a God as you
 say,
 His Love would have power over Hell till it utterly vanish'd
 away.

19

Ah yet—I have had some glimmer, at times, in my gloomiest
 woe,
 Of a God behind all—after all—the great God for aught that
 I know;
 But the God of Love and of Hell together—they cannot be
 thought,
 If there be such a God, may the Great God curse him and bring
 him to nought!

20

Blasphemy! whose is the fault? is it mine? for why would you
 save
 A madman to vex you with wretched words, who is best in his
 grave?
 Blasphemy! ay, why not, being damn'd beyond hope of grace?
 O would I were yonder with her, and away from your faith
 and your face!
 Blasphemy! true! I have scared you pale with my scandalous talk,
 But the Blasphemy to *my* mind lies all in the way that you walk.

21

Hence! she is gone! can I stay? can I breathe divorced from the
 Past?
 You needs must have good lynx-eyes if I do not escape you at
 last.
 Our orthodox coroner doubtless will find it a *felo-de-se*,
 And the stake and the cross-road, fool, if you will, does it matter
 to me?

TOMORROW

I

Her, that yer Honour was spakin' to? Whin, yer Honour? last year—

Standin' here be the bridge, when last yer Honour was here? An' yer Honour ye gev her the top of the mornin', 'Tomorra' says she.

What did they call her, yer Honour? They call'd her Molly Magee.

An' yer Honour's the thrue ould blood that always manes to be kind,

But there's rason in all things, yer Honour, for Molly was out of her mind.

2

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night comin' down be the sthrame,

An' it seems to me now like a bit of yisther-day in a dhrame—Here where yer Honour seen her—there was but a slip of a moon, But I hard thim—Molly Magee wid her batchelor, Danny O'Roon—

'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the crathur' an' Danny says 'Troth, an' I been

Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus O'Shea at Katty's shebeen;¹ But I must be lavin' ye soon.' 'Ochone are ye goin' away?'

'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate' he says 'over the say'— 'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an' I hard him 'Molly asthore I'll meet you agin tomorra,' says he, 'be the chapel-door.' 'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?'

'O' Monday mornin' ' says he; 'An' shure thin ye'll meet me tomorra?'

'Tomorra, tomorra, Machree!' Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honour, that had no likin' for Dan,

Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to come away from the man, An' Molly Magee kem flying across me, as light as a lark, An' Dan stood there for a minute, an' thin wint into the dark. But wirrahl the storm that night—the tundher, an' rain that fell, An' the sthrames runnin' down at the back o' the glin 'ud 's dhrownded Hell.

3

But airth was at pace nixt mornin', an' Hiven in its glory smiled, As the Holy Mother o' Glory that smiles at her sleepin' child—

'Grog-Shop.

Ethen—she stept an the chapel-green, an' she turn'd herself
roun'
Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for Danny was not to be foun',
An' many's the time that I watch'd her at mass lettin' down the
tear,
For the Divil a Danny was there, yer Honour, for forty year.

4

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the rose an' the white o' the
May,
An' yer hair as black as the night, an' yer eyes as bright as the
day!
Achora, yer laste little whishper was sweet as the lilt of a bird!
Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to music wid ivery word!
An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in sich an illigant han',
An' the fall of yer foot in the dance was as light as snow an the
lan',
An' the sun kem out of a cloud whiniver ye walkt in the shstreet,
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda, an' laid himself undher
yer feet,
An' I loved ye meself wid a heart and a half, me darlin', and he
'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a kiss of ye, Molly Magee.

5

But shure we wor betther frinds whin I crack'd his skull for her
sake,
An' he ped me back wid the best he could give at ould Donovan's
wake—
For the boys wor about her agin whin Dan didn't come to the
fore,
An' Shamus along wid the rest, but she put thim all to the door.
An', ather, I thried her meself av the bird 'ud come to me call,
But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listhen to naither at all, at all.

6

An' her nabours an frinds 'ud consowl an' condowl wid her,
airly and late,
'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst over say to the Sassenach
whate;
He's gone to the States, aroon, an' he's married another wife,
An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of the thraithur agin in life!
An' to dhrame of a married man, death alive, is a mortal sin.'
But Molly says 'I'd his hand-promise, an' shure he'll meet me
agin.'

7

An' afther her paärints had inter'd glory, an' both in wan day,
She began to spake to herself, the crathur, an' whisper, an' say,
'Tomorra, Tomorra!' an' Father Molowny he tuk her in han',
'Molly, you're manin',' he says, 'me dear, av I undherstan',
That ye'll meet your paärints agin an' yer Danny O'Roon afore
God

Wid his blessed Marthyrs an' Saints;' an' she gev him a frindly
nod,

'Tomorra, Tomorra,' she says, an' she didn't intind to desave,
But her wits wor dead, an' her hair was as white as the snow an
a grave.

8

Arrah now, here last month they wor diggin' the bog, an' they
foun'

Dhrownded in black bog-wather a corp lyin' undher groun'.

9

Yer Honour's own agint, he says to me wanst, at Katty's shebeen,
'The Divil take all the black lan', for a blessin' 'ud come wid the
green!

An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut his bit o' turf for the
fire?

But och! bad scan to the bogs whin they swallies the man intire!
An' sorra the bog that's in Hiven wid all the light an' the glow,
An' there's hate enough, shure, widout *thim* in the Divil's
kitchen below.

10

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I hard his Riverence say,
Could keep their haithen kings in the flesh for the Jidgemint day,
An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they kep the cat an' the dog,
But it 'ud 'a been aisier work av they lived be an Irish bog.

11

How-an-iver they laid this body they foun' an the grass
Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud see it that wint in to
mass—

But a frish gineration had riz, an' most of the ould was few,
An' I didn't know him meself, an' none of the parish knew.

12

But Molly kem limpin' up wid her stick, she was lamed iv a
knee,

Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, 'Div ye know him, Molly Magee?'

An' she stood up strait as the Queen of the world—she lifted
her head—
'He said he would meet me tomorra!' an' dhropt down dead
an the dead.

13

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye would start back agin
into life,
Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer wake like husban' an'
wife.
Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet for the frinds that was
gone!
Sorra the silent throat but we hard it cryin' 'Ochone!'
An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten childer, hansome an' tall,
Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if he had lost thim all.

14

Thin his Riverence buried thim both in wan grave be the dead
boor-tree,¹
The young man Danny O'Roon wid his ould woman, Molly
Magee.

15

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim blossom an' spring from the
grass,
Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as ye did—over yer Crass!
An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid his song to the Sun an'
the Moon,
An' tell thim in Hiven about Molly Magee an' her Danny
O'Roon,
Till Holy St. Pether gets up wid his kays an' opens the gate!
An' shure, be the Crass, that's batther nor cuttin' the Sassenach
whate
To be there wid the Blessed Mother, an' Saints an' Marthyrs
galore,
An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers' for iver an' ivermore.

16

An' now that I tould yer Honour whatever I hard an' seen,
Yer Honour 'ill give me a thrifle to dhrink yer health in potheen.

¹Elder tree.

IN MEMORIAM A.H.H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

On page 26 I have described the way in which this poem was composed and said something of its form and purport. In a volume like the present, there is not room for more than the minimum of notes and I will, therefore, include only what is necessary (a) to explain obscure words and phrases and (b) to make clear the drift of the poem and the connexion (often extremely subtle) between its various parts. Anyone who requires a fuller explanation should study A. C. Bradley's "A Commentary on Tennyson's *In Memoriam*" and the notes on the poem in the Collected Editions of Tennyson's Works, published by Macmillan & Co. Where the two conflict, the latter should be regarded as authoritative.

A word or two needs to be said about the chronology of *In Memoriam*. Certain dates are clearly stated or implied, though the exact sequence is not always maintained. The first date is, of course, that of Arthur Hallam's death—September 15th, 1833. Sections 28–30 describe Christmas of 1833. The reference to Arthur's burial in Section 18 suggests that this took place well before Christmas. In fact, owing to the time taken by the ship in bringing his body back from Italy, the burial was not till January 3rd, 1834. After this, the following dates are clearly identifiable:

Section 38	Spring, 1834.
" 72	1st anniversary of Hallam's death Sept. 15, 1834.
" 78	Christmas, 1834.
Section 83	Spring, 1835.
" 88 and 89	Late spring and early summer, 1835.
Section 95	High summer, 1835.

At this point the chronology is considerably relaxed. In his memoir of the poet (page 124 of single volume edition), Hallam Tennyson says that Section 98 refers to the wedding tour of Alfred's brother Charles, who was married in May, 1836: Section 99 describes another anniversary of Arthur's death (September 15th): Sections 100–103 relate to the departure of the Tennyson family from Somersby, which took place in 1837: and Sections 104, 105 and 106 to Christmas, 1837, and New Year, 1838. In Section 107 there is a description of Arthur's birthday, February 1st, presumably in 1838, and the last indications of the season are 115 and 116, which must relate to the spring of 1838. The Epilogue describes the wedding of Cecilia Tennyson to Edmund Lushington in 1842, and the Prologue is dated by the poet 1849. Commentators generally say that the main sequence of the poem (ignoring Prologue and Epilogue) covers a period of two-and-a-half years, ignoring the fact that the Tennysons did not leave Somersby till 1837, so that if actual dates are to be strictly adhered to, the time is really four-and-a-half years. No doubt the poet deliberately omitted the two Christmases of 1835 and 1836 in order to avoid a monotonous repetition, and did not wish the question of chronology to be unduly pressed.

Introduction. These stanzas, which were added in 1849 when Tennyson was considering the publication of his poem, sum up the faith which underlies it, and which involves belief in a God of Love who is guiding the universe—a God who is Love (see the first Epistle of St. John, ch. 4)—in the immortality of the human spirit, and in the freedom of the human will and its ultimate coincidence with the Divine Will. None of these things can, he admits, be proved, or, indeed, fully understood, though human conceptions of them should become more comprehensive with the increase of knowledge.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
 Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
 By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
 Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
 Thou madest Life in man and brute;
 Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
 Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
 Thou madest man, he knows not why,
 He thinks he was not made to die;
 And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
 Our wills are ours, we know not how;
 Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
 They have their day and cease to be:
 They are but broken lights of thee,
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
 For knowledge is of things we see;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
 A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
 But 'more of reverence in us dwell;
 That mind and soul, according well,
 May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
 We mock thee when we do not fear;
 But help thy foolish ones to bear;
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
 What seem'd my worth since I began;
 For merit lives from man to man,
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
 I trust he lives in thee, and there
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
 Confusions of a wasted youth;
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849

1¹

I held it truth, with him who sings
 To one clear harp in divers tones,²
 That men may rise on stepping-stones
 Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
 And find in loss a gain to match?
 Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
 The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
 Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
 Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
 To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
 The long result of love, and boast,
 'Behold the man that loved and lost,
 But all he was is overworn.'

2

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
 That name the under-lying dead,
 Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
 Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

¹Sections 1-8 show the poet's mind, staggering under the first shock of his friend's death. He feels that the extremity of grief which he is suffering is, perhaps, morbid and weakening (Section 3), but he dare not suppress it for fear of suppressing love too (Section 1). In this mood he envies the churchyard yew tree its apparent stubborn absorption in the fact of death (Section 2). The dull sense of loss haunts him even in sleep; waking, he resolves to master it (Section 4). The verses which he composes are an anodyne, but cannot touch the heart of his grief (Section 5). The commonplace consolations of friends are unavailing (Sections 6 and 7).

²This reference is to Goethe, whom Tennyson considered consummate in many styles. One of his last sayings was "from changes to higher changes".

The seasons bring the flower again,
 And bring the firstling to the flock;
 And in the dusk of thee, the clock
 Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
 Who changest not in any gale,
 Nor branding summer suns avail
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
 I seem to fail from out my blood
 And grow incorporate into thee.

3

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;
 A web is wov'n across the sky;
 From out waste places comes a cry,
 And murmurs from the dying sun;

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
 With all the music in her tone,
 A hollow echo of my own,—
 A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good;
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

4

To Sleep I give my powers away;
 My will is bondsman to the dark;
 I sit within a helmless bark,
 And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
 That thou should'st fail from thy desire,
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,
 'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
 Some pleasure from thine early years.
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
 That grief hath shaken into frost!¹

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
 All night below the darken'd eyes;
 With morning wakes the will, and cries,
 'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

5

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel;
 For words, like Nature, half reveal
 And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds,² I'll wrap me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the cold:
 But that large grief which these enfold
 Is given in outline and no more.

6

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'
 That 'Loss is common to the race'—
 And common is the commonplace,
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
 My own less bitter, rather more:
 Too common! Never morning wore
 To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
 Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

¹Water can be reduced below freezing point without solidifying. If it is shaken, however, it expands into ice and breaks the vessel containing it. *cf.* Carlyle's *French Revolution* (ch. 9, and para.), published in 1837.

²Garments, as in "widows weeds".

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
 At that last hour to please him well;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
 And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
 Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
 That sittest ranging golden hair;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
 In expectation of a guest;
 And thinking 'this will please him best,'
 She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
 And with the thought her colour burns;
 And, having left the glass, she turns
 Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
 Had fallen, and her future Lord
 Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
 Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
 And what to me remains of good?
 To her, perpetual maidenhood,¹
 And unto me no second friend.

7

Dark house,² by which once more I stand
 Here in the long unlovely street,
 Doors, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,

¹It is often wrongly assumed that this refers to Tennyson's sister Emily who was engaged to Arthur Hallam. The picture is entirely imaginary.

²Henry Hallam's house, 67 Wimpole Street.

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

8

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying, there at least may die.

9¹

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Saiest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

¹In sections 9-17 the poet's thoughts concentrate on the ship which is bringing his friend's body home from the Continent.

So draw him home to those that mourn
 In vain; a favourable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
 As our pure love, thro' early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
 My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

10

I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the night;
 I see the cabin-window bright;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
 And travell'd men from foreign lands;
 And letters unto trembling hands;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies: O to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
 The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells¹
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
 And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
 Should toss with tangle and with shells.

¹*Well* is sometimes used for 'whirlpool', cf. Scott's *Pirate*, ch. 38, "The wells of Tuphiloë".

11

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

12

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?'
And circle moaning in the air:
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play
 About the prow, and back return
 To where the body sits, and learn
 That I have been an hour away.

13

Tears of the widower, when he sees
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
 And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
 Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
 A void where heart on heart reposed;
 And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
 Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
 An awful thought, a life removed,
 The human-hearted man I loved,
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,
 I do not suffer in a dream;
 For now so strange do these things seem,
 Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
 And glance about the approaching sails,
 As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
 And not the burthen that they bring.

14

If one should bring me this report,
 That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,
 And I went down unto the quay,
 And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
 Should see thy passengers in rank
 Come stepping lightly down the plank,
 And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
 The man I held as half-divine;
 Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
 And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
 And how my life had droop'd of late,
 And he should sorrow o'er my state
 And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
 No hint of death in all his frame,
 But found him all in all the same,
 I should not feel it to be strange.

15

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping day;
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
 The cattle huddled on the lea;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
 The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a labouring breast,
 And topples round the dreary west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

16

What words are these have fall'n from me?
 Can calm despair and wild unrest
 Be tenants of a single breast,
 Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
 The touch of change in calm or storm;
 But knows no more of transient form
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunn'd me from my power to think
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

17

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week: the days go by:
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark;
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

18¹

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

19

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.²

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When filled with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

¹Sections 18-27 show the poet slowly forming the "firmer mind". The agony of grief sometimes finds relief in self expression (21) or in deliberate recollection (22, 24 and 25). At the end of 27, comes a break in the poem following a statement, which seems to mark a definite step in recovery, "Tis better to have loved and lost. . . ."

²The Wye runs into the Severn Estuary near Chepstow. As the tide flows from the sea, it deepens and silences the river, whereas, when it turns and ebbs, the river becomes shallower and bubbles over the stones again.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls;
 My deeper anguish also falls,
 And I can speak a little then.

20

The lesser griefs that may be said,
 That breathe a thousand tender vows,
 Are but as servants in a house
 Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
 And weep the fulness from the mind:
 'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find
 Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
 That out of words a comfort win;
 But there are other griefs within,
 And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
 Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
 And scarce endure to draw the breath,
 Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,
 So much the vital spirits sink
 To see the vacant chair, and think,
 'How good! how kind! and he is gone.'

21

I sing to him that rests below,
 And, since the grasses round me wave,
 I take the grasses of the grave,
 And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
 And sometimes harshly will he speak:
 'This fellow would make weakness weak
 And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,
 He loves to make parade of pain,
 That with his piping he may gain
 The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

22

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And, crown'd with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

23

Now sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb;
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:¹

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

24

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.²

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first Sun arose and set.

¹God of nature and the country-side in Greek mythology.

²The last two lines refer to the darkening of the Sun's surface by "Sun-spots".

And is it that the haze of grief
 Makes former gladness loom so great?
 The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
 A glory from its being far;
 And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

25

I know that this was Life,—the track
 Whereon with equal feet we fared;
 And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
 As light as carrier-birds in air;
 I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
 When mighty Love would cleave in twain
 The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

26

Still onward winds the dreary way;
 I with it; for I long to prove
 No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
 And goodness, and hath power to see
 Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
 Or see (in Him is no before)
 In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,
 That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

27

I envy not in any moods
 The captive void of noble rage,
 The linnet born within the cage,
 That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
 His license in the field of time,
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
 To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
 The heart that never plighted troth
 But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;
 'Tis better to have loved and lost
 Than never to have loved at all.

28¹

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
 The moon is hid; the night is still;
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
 From far and near, on mead and moor,
 Swell out and fail, as if a door
 Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease,
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

¹28-30 which describe Christmas, 1833, mark the beginning of a new sequence. At the end of 30 the idea of personal immortality is introduced for the first time in lines much more hopeful than any that have preceded them. 31-32, describing the raising of Lazarus, ask the questions, what proof is there of survival? What can survival mean? In 33 and 36 the poet suggests that Christian faith may provide a satisfactory answer to those capable of it, or one may have to trust in a merely instinctive assertion (34). Without such belief the highest human love would hardly be possible (35). This sequence is closed by 37 and 38 in which the poet apologizes for attempting to deal with such tremendous questions, and expresses the hope that what he says may reach and not displease his friend.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

29

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest
To enrich the threshold of the night
With shower'd largess of delight
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;
Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their time? They too will die.

30

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambol'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
 We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
 A merry song we sang with him
 Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us: surely rest is meet:
 'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
 Once more we sang: 'They do not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
 With gather'd power, yet the same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
 O Father, touch the east, and light
 The light that shone when Hope was born.

31

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
 And home to Mary's house return'd,
 Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
 To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou brother, those four days?'
 There lives no record of reply,
 Which telling what it is to die
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,
 The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
 A solemn gladness even crown'd
 The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
 The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
 He told it not; or something seal'd
 The lips of that Evangelist.

32

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

33

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good:
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood¹
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

¹I do not think that Tennyson intends to express any doubt as to the divinity of Christ. He is urging the danger of shaking the faith and happiness of others by questioning it.

34

My own dim life should teach me this,
 'That life shall live for evermore,
 Else earth is darkness at the core,
 And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
 Fantastic beauty, such as lurks
 In some wild Poet, when he works
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
 'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
 Of things all mortal, or to use
 A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
 Like birds the charming serpent draws,
 To drop head-foremost in the jaws
 Of vacant darkness and to cease.

35

Yet if some voice that man could trust
 Should murmur from the narrow house,
 'The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
 Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,
 But for one hour, O Love, I strive
 To keep so sweet a thing alive:'
 But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
 'The sound of streams that swift or slow
 Draw down Æonian¹ hills, and sow
 The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
 'The sound of that forgetful shore
 Will change my sweetness more and more,
 Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
 An idle case? If Death were seen
 At first as Death, Love had not been,
 Or been in narrowest working shut,

¹Everlasting, from the Greek *aiwv*, an age.

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

36

Tho' truths in manhood¹ darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

37

Urania² speaks with-darken'd brow:
'Thou pratest here where thou art least;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene³ replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
'I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

¹Human nature.

²Greek goddess of astronomy. Here she is the goddess of sacred poetry, as in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (bk. 7, line 1).

³The Greek goddess of tragedy or elegy.

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said),

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;
And loiter'd in the master's¹ field,
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

38

With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits render'd free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

39

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,²
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;³
But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

¹Arthur Hallam.

^{2,3}This section refers back to section 2 and strikes a definitely hopeful note. The yew tree does feel the influence of spring, as is shown by the pollen dust which arises from it and the presence of male and female flowers in the same tree. In the last stanza the emphasis is on the word *lying*.

And darkening the dark graves of men,—
 What whisper'd from her lying lips?
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
 And passes into gloom again.

40¹

Could we forget the widow'd hour
 And look on Spirits breathed away,
 As on a maiden in the day
 When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise
 To take her latest leave of home,
 And hopes and light regrets that come
 Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
 And tears are on the mother's face,
 As parting with a long embrace
 She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
 Becoming as is meet and fit
 A link among the days, to knit
 The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
 A life that bears immortal fruit
 In those great offices that suit
 The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
 How often shall her old fireside
 Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
 And bring her babe, and make her boast,
 Till even those that miss'd her most
 Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
 Till growing winters lay me low;
 My paths are in the fields I know,
 And thine in undiscover'd lands.

¹40-47 return to the problems of the survival of personality and the possibility of an ultimate reunion between the poet and his friend.

41

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
 Did ever rise from high to higher;
 As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
 As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
 And I have lost the links that bound
 Thy changes; here upon the ground,
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—
 That I could wing my will with might
 To leap the grades of life and light,
 And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields
 To that vague fear implied in death;
 Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
 The howlings from forgotten¹ fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
 An inner trouble I behold,
 A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
 That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
 The wonders that have come to thee,
 Thro' all the secular to-be,
 But evermore a life behind.

42

I vex my heart with fancies dim:
 He still outstript me in the race;
 It was but unity of place
 That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
 And he the much-beloved again,
 A lord of large experience, train
 To riper growth the mind and will:

¹This stanza no doubt refers to the terrors of Hell as described, for example, in Dante's *Inferno*. Tennyson definitely rejected the idea of eternal punishment. *Forgotten* is an effective epithet, the exact implication of which has baffled the commentators.

And what delights can equal those
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
 When one that loves but knows not, reaps
 A truth from one that loves and knows?

43

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
 And every spirit's folded bloom
 Thro' all its intervital gloom
 In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
 Bare of the body, might it last,
 And silent traces of the past
 Be all the colour of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
 So that still garden of the souls
 In many a figured leaf enrolls
 The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
 As when he loved me here in Time,
 And at the spiritual prime
 Rewaken with the dawning soul.

44

How fares it with the happy dead?
 For here the man ~~is~~ more and more;
 But he forgets the days before
 God shut the doorways of his head.¹

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
 Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
 A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
 (If Death so taste Lethean springs),
 May some dim touch of earthly things
 Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

¹This line refers to the closing of the gap in a baby's skull which takes place some time in its second year. It has been thought that memory only begins after this closure.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
 O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
 My guardian angel will speak out
 In that high place, and tell thee all.

45

The baby new to earth and sky,
 What time his tender palm is prest
 Against the circle of the breast,
 Has never thought that 'this is I:'
 But as he grows he gathers much,
 And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'
 And finds 'I am not what I see,
 And other than the things I touch.'
 So rounds he to a separate mind
 From whence clear memory may begin,
 As thro' the frame that binds him in
 His isolation grows defined.
 This use may lie in blood and breath,
 Which else were fruitless of their due,
 Had man to learn himself anew
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

46

We ranging down this lower track,
 The path we came by, thorn and flower,
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
 Lest life should fail in looking back.
 So be it: there no shade can last
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
 But clear from marge to marge³ shall bloom
 The eternal landscape of the past;
 A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
 The fruitful hours of still increase;
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
 And those five years its richest field.
 O Love, thy province were not large,
 A bounded field, nor stretching far;
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.¹

¹*Marge to marge* means from birth to death. When the Poet is able to review his life from beyond the grave he will see the whole of it illumined by his love for Arthur, not only the five years of their friendship.

47

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good:
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

48¹

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
But better serves a wholesome law,
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

¹48 and 49 close the preceding group of poems (40-47) just as the somewhat similar sections 37 and 38 closed the group which preceded them.

49

From art, from nature, from the schools,
 Let random influences glance,
 Like light in many a shiver'd lance
 That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
 The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,
 The slightest air of song shall breathe
 To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
 But blame not thou the winds that make
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,
 The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly drown
 The bases of my life in tears.

50¹

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
 And tingle; and the heart is sick,
 And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
 Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
 And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
 And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
 And men the flies of latter spring,
 That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
 And weave their petty cells and die.

¹The discussion of problems connected with the idea of personal immortality in 40-47 leads to a passionate prayer for immediate communion with Arthur (50). This leads again to doubts as to the worthiness of the inevitably imperfect human personality for communion with the perfected and purified spirit of the departed (51-53). The poet's consciousness of his own defects is rapidly generalized and leads to a terrible doubt whether, in view of the cruelty and waste which seem inherent in nature, Love can really be "Creation's Final Law" (56). This group also is closed by two sections (57 and 58) in which the poet speaks of the inadequacy of his poem and the need for a noble resignation. The effect of this is felt in 59-65 which deal with the present relation of the friends and the poet's desire that Arthur should think of him now and perhaps even be able to derive some benefit from their friendship.

Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

51

Do we indeed desire the dead
 Should still be near us at our side?
 Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
 I had such reverence for his blame,
 See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
 Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
 There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
 Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
 With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

52

I cannot love thee as I ought,
 For love reflects the thing beloved;
 My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'
 The Spirit of true love replied;
 'Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
 To that ideal which he bears?
 What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:¹

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
 That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.
 Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

¹The reference is to the life of Christ.

53

How many a father have I seen,
 A sober man, among his boys,
 Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
 Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give,
 That had the wild oat not been sown,
 The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
 The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
 For life outliving heats of youth,
 Yet who would preach it as a truth
 To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
 For fear divine Philosophy
 Should push beyond her mark, and be
 Procureess to the Lords of Hell.

54

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
 That not one life shall be destroy'd,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
 That not a moth with vain desire
 It shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last—far off—at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
 An infant crying in the night:
 An infant crying for the light:
 And with no language but a cry.

55

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
 That Nature lends such evil dreams?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

56

'So careful of the type?' but no.
 From scarped cliff and quarried stone
 She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
 I bring to life, I bring to death:
 The spirit does but mean the breath:
 I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
 Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
 And love Creation's final law—
 Tho' Nature, red in-tooth and claw
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the Just,
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,
 That tare each other in their slime,
 Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
 What hope of answer, or redress?
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

57

Peace; come away: the song of woe
 Is after all an earthly song:
 Peace; come away: we do him wrong
 To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
 But half my life I leave behind:
 Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
 But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
 One set slow bell will seem to toll
 The passing of the sweetest soul
 That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
 Eternal greetings to the dead;
 And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
 'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

58

In those sad words I took farewell:
 Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
 As drop by drop the water falls
 In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
 Of hearts that beat from day to day,
 Half-conscious of their dying clay,
 And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

59

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

60

He past; a soul of nobler tone:
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.'

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by:
At night she weeps, 'How vain am I!
How should he love a thing so low?'

61

If, in thy second state sublime,
 Thy ransom'd reason change replies
 With all the circle of the wise,
 The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
 How dimly character'd and slight,
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,
 How blanch'd with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
 Where thy first form was made a man;
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
 The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

62

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
 Then be my love an idle tale,
 And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than boy,
 On some unworthy heart with joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies,
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
 Is matter for a flying smile.

63

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
 And love in which my hound has part,
 Can hang no weight upon my heart
 In its assumptions¹ up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
 As thou, perchance, art more than I,
 And yet I spare them sympathy,
 And I would set their pains at ease.

¹Assumption means ascent, with an echo of the word's use in connexion with such Christian celebrations as "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin".

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
 As, unto vaster motions bound,
 The circuits of thine orbit round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

64

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
 And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
 And breasts the blows of circumstance,
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
 And lives to clutch the golden keys,
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
 The pillar of a people's hope,
 The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs
 He play'd at counsellors and kings,
 With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
 And reaps the labour of his hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands;
 'Does my old friend remember me?'

65

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
 I lull a fancy trouble-tost
 With 'Love's too precious to be lost,
 A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
 Till out of painful phases wrought
 There flutters up a happy thought,
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends,
 And thine effect so lives in me,
 A part of mine may live in thee
 And move thee on to noble ends.

66¹

You thought my heart too far diseased;
 You wonder when my fancies play,
 To find me gay among the gay,
 Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
 Which makes a desert in the mind,
 Has made me kindly with my kind,
 And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
 Whose jest among his friends is free,
 Who takes the children on his knee,
 And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
 For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
 His inner day can never die,
 His night of loss is always there.

67

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
 I know that in thy place of rest
 By that broad water of the west,
 There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
 As slowly steals a silver flame
 Along the letters of thy name,
 And o'er the number of thy years.

¹This section gives the first hint of a humanizing influence in the poet's great sorrow. It leads on to a group of sections (67-71) dealing with sleep and dreams, all marked by an increasing serenity. The last stanza of 69 hints at the mystical solution of the poet's grief which finally emerges in 129-131.

The mystic glory swims away;
 From off my bed the moonlight dies;
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes
 I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
 A lurid veil from coast to coast,
 And in the dark church like a ghost
 Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

68

When in the down I sink my head,
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
 When all our path was fresh with dew,
 And all the bugle breezes blew
 Reveille to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
 I find a trouble in thine eye,
 Which makes me sad I know not why,
 Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
 I wake, and I discern the truth;
 It is the trouble of my youth
 That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

69

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,
 That Nature's ancient power was lost:
 The streets were black with smoke and frost,
 They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,
 I found a wood with thorny boughs:
 I took the thorns to bind my brows,
 I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
 From youth and babe and hoary hairs:
 They call'd me in the public squares
 The fool that wears a crown of thorns:

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:
 I found an angel of the night;
 The voice was low, the look was bright;
 He look'd upon my crown and smiled:

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
 That seem'd to touch it into leaf:
 The voice was not the voice of grief,
 The words were hard to understand.

70

I cannot see the features right,
 When on the gloom I strive to paint
 The face I know; the hues are faint
 And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
 A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
 A hand that points, and palled shapes
 In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
 And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;
 Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
 And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
 I hear a wizard music roll,
 And thro' a lattice on the soul
 Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

71

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
 And madness, thou hast forged at last
 A night-long Present of the Past
 In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
 Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
 Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong
 That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
 Of men and minds, the dust of change,
 The days that grow to something strange,
 In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
 The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
 The cataract flashing from the bridge,
 The breaker breaking on the beach.

72¹

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 And howlest, issuing out of night,
 With blasts that blow the popular white,
 And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
 To pine in that reverse of doom,
 Which sicken'd every living bloom,
 And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
 With thy quick tears that make the rose
 Pull sideways, and the daisy close
 Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame
 Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
 A chequer-work of beam and shade
 Along the hills, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
 Day, mark'd a; with some hideous crime,
 When the dark hand struck down thro' time,
 And cancell'd nature's best; but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
 Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
 And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
 And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
 Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
 Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
 And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

¹This stanza commemorates the first anniversary of Arthur's death, Sept. 15, 1834, and leads to a group of sections (73-77) in which the poet dwells on the tragedy of his friend's unfulfilled promise and his own inability to immortalize him.

73

So many worlds, so much to do,
 So little done, such things to be,
 How know I what had need of thee,
 For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
 The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath:
 I curse not nature, no, nor death;
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
 Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:
 What fame is left for human deeds
 In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
 Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
 And self-infolds the large results
 Of force that would have forged a name.

74

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
 To those that watch it, more and more
 A likeness, hardly seen before,
 Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
 I see thee what thou art, and know
 Thy likeness to the wise below,
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
 And what I see I leave unsaid,
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
 His darkness beautiful with thee.

75

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
 In verse that brings myself relief,
 And by the measure of my grief
 I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howso'er expert
 In fitting aptest words to things,
 Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
 Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
 To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
 And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
 The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
 But somewhere, out of human view,
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

76

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
 And in a moment set thy face
 Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;¹

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
 The secular abyss to come,
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
 The darkness of our planet, last,
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
 And what are they when these remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

77

What hope is here for modern rhyme
 To him, who turns a musing eye
 On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

¹The meaning of this stanza is that space is so vast that in relation to it our universe would look as small as a needle's point.

These mortal lullabies of pain
 May bind a book, may line a box,
 May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
 Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
 And, passing, turn the page that tells
 A grief, then changed to something else,
 Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways
 Shall ring with music all the same;
 To breathe my loss is more than fame,
 To utter love more sweet than praise.

78¹

Again at Christmas did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas hearth;
 The silent snow possess'd the earth,
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
 No wing of wind the region swept,
 But over all things brooding slept
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
 Again our ancient games had place,
 The mimic picture's breathing grace,
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

¹Christmas, 1834, falls *calmly* not as in the preceding year (30) *sadly*. The family reunion sends the poet's mind back to 9 where he spoke of Arthur having been more to him than his brothers and in 79 he makes amends to his favourite brother Charles. 80-95 show that the spring and summer of 1836 were a critical time in the poet's progress to recovery. 83, 86 and 88 describe a passion of joy, bursting, as in the nightingale's song, from "the midmost heart of grief". The poet is now able, though at first with some danger to "the low beginnings of content", to dwell on all that Arthur might have accomplished had he lived; on all that his union with Emily would have meant for the family (84); on his own pride and delight in their Cambridge friendship (87) and on the joys of Arthur's summer visits to Somersby (89). He is able once more to think of other friends and new friendships and to rejoice in the mighty hopes for the future of the human race of which he and Arthur had so often talked together. These memories revive his longing for present communion, now thought of as purely spiritual. Sections 90-94 discuss the possibility of this, 91 containing a passionate prayer for it (in the spring of 1835) and 95, a poem of mid-summer, describing how communion is in some sense achieved.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

79

'More than my brothers are to me,'—
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

80

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
 I hear the sentence that he speaks;
 He bears the burthen of the weeks
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
 And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
 Unused example from the grave
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

81

Could I have said while he was here,
 'My love shall now no further range;
 There cannot come a mellow change,
 For now is love mature in ear'!

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
 What end is here to my complaint?
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,
 'More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain,
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

82

I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and face;
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
 From state to state the spirit walks;
 And these are but shatter'd stalks,
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
 The use of virtue out of earth:
 I know transplanted human worth
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart;
 He put our lives so far apart
 We cannot hear each other speak.

83

Dip down upon the northern shore,
 O sweet new-year delaying long;
 Thou doest expectant nature wrong;
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?
 Can trouble live with April days,
 Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
 The little speedwell's darling blue,
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
 That longs to burst a frozen bud
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

84

When I contemplate all alone
 The life that had been thine below,
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow
 To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
 A central warmth diffusing bliss
 In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
 On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
 For now the day was drawing on,
 When thou should'st link thy life with one
 Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
 But that remorseless iron hour
 Made cypress of her orange flower,
 Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
 To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
 I see their unborn faces shine
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table-talk,
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labour fills
 The lips of men with honest praise,
 And sun by sun the happy days
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
 And all the train of bounteous hours
 Conduct by paths of growing powers,
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,
 Leaving great legacies of thought,
 Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
 As link'd with thine in love and fate,
 And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
 To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
 And He that died in Holy Land
 Would reach us out the shining hand,
 And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
 The old bitterness again, and break
 The low beginnings of content.

85

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all——

O true in word,¹ and tried in deed,
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common grief,
 What kind of life is that I lead;

¹Addressed to a friend, probably Edmund Lushington.

And whether trust in things above
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;
And whether love for him have drain'd
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
And show'd him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,
To wander on a darken'd earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
 With gifts of grace, that might express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilising intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual strife,
 Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I met;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch;
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
 Eternal, separate from fears:
 The all-assuming months and years
 Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,
 And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
 And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
 Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb,
 And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,
 A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
 'Arise, and get thee forth and seek
 A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall;
' 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would say;
Or so shall grief with symbols play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
 The primrose of the later year,
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

86

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
 Of evening over brake and bloom
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
 And shadowing down the horned¹ flood
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy breath
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odour streaming far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

87

I past beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the gown;
 I roved at random thro' the town,
 And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
 The storm their high-built organs make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
 The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
 The measured pulse of racing oars
 Among the willows; paced the shores
 And many a bridge, and all about

¹ This line describes a bay or estuary between two promontories. The image is associated with Barmouth, where this stanza was written.

The same gray flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same; and last
 Up that long walk of limes I past
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:
 I linger'd; all within was noise
 Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
 That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
 Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
 And labour, and the changing mart,
 And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
 But send it slackly from the string;
 And one would pierce an outer ring,
 And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
 Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
 We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
 And music in the bounds of law,
 To those conclusions when we saw
 The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
 And over those ethereal eyes
 The bar of Michael Angelo.¹

88

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
 Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,²
 O tell me where the senses mix,
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
 And in the midmost heart of grief
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

¹Arthur Hallam, like Michael Angelo, had a prominent ridge of bone over his eyes.

²Quick-set hedgerows.

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
 I cannot all command the strings;
 The glory of the sum of things
 Will flash along the chords and go.

89

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
 And thou, with all thy breadth and height
 Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
 My Arthur found your shadows fair,
 And shook to all the liberal air
 The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;
 He mixt in all our simple sports;
 They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
 And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and mark
 The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
 The gust that round the garden flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,
 Or here she brought the harp and flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
 And break the livelong summer day
 With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge' he said 'in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,¹

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

90

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine;

¹The planet Venus was thought to have been formed by the condensation of vapours thrown off from a central mass, which condensed to form the Sun. The Sun is therefore here called the father of Venus and these lines describe Venus setting in the red after-glow of the Sun, which has set just before.

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other hands;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

91

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;¹

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

92

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

¹These two lines describe the kingfisher in early spring darting along a river just below its bush-crowned banks.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
 A fact within the coming year;
 And tho' the months, revolving near,
 Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
 But spiritual presentiments,
 And such refraction of events
 As often rises ere they rise.

93

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
 No spirit ever brake the band
 That stays him from the native land
 Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
 But he, the Spirit himself, may come
 Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
 With gods in unconjectured bliss,
 O, from the distance of the abyss
 Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
 The wish too strong for words to name;
 That in this blindness of the frame
 My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

94

How pure at heart and sound in head,
 With what divine affections bold
 Should be the man whose thought would hold
 An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
 The spirits from their golden day,
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
 Imaginations calm and fair,
 The memory like a cloudless air,
 The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,
 And doubt beside the portal waits,
 They can but listen at the gates,
 And hear the household jar within.

95

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
 For underfoot the herb was dry;
 And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
 The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
 Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd:
 The brook alone far-off was heard,
 And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
 And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
 From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me and night,
 And in the house light after light
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
 Of that glad year¹ which once had been,
 In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
 The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying change
 To test his worth; and strangely spoke

¹Some commentators interpret this as referring to the whole period (4½ years) of the friendship, which seems to me inadmissible. I believe the reference is to the period following Arthur's 21st birthday (between Feb., 1832 and his death in Sept., 1833) when his engagement to Emily was recognized by his father and his friendship with Tennyson was able to reach its greatest freedom and intensity of joy.

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward back,
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from the past,
 And all at once it seem'd at last
 The¹ living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his¹ was wound, and whirl'd
 About empyreal heights of thought,
 And came on that which is, and caught
 The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
 The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
 The blows of Death. At length my trance
 Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
 In matter-moulded forms of speech,
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach
 Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
 The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycamore,
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering fresher overhead,
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung
 The lilies to and fro, and said

¹Until 1878 the last line of the ninth stanza read "His living soul" and the first line of the tenth "and mine in his". Tennyson, on thinking over this mystical experience, came to feel the impossibility of saying definitely that it was Arthur's spirit with which he had established communion and not something vaster and more all-embracing (*cf.* 130). He, therefore, with characteristic intellectual honesty, altered the passage, although by doing so he diminished the poignancy of the poem.

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
 And East and West, without a breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

96¹

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
 Are tender over drowning flies,
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one² indeed I knew
 In many a subtle question versed,
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
 But ever strove to make it true:

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,
 At last he beat his music out.
 There lives more faith in honest doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
 He would not make his judgment blind,
 He faced the spectres of the mind
 And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
 And Power was with him in the night,
 Which makes the darkness and the light,
 And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,
 While Israel made their gods of gold,
 Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.³

¹After the very important group of poems 78-95 there is a pause which is marked by four disconnected sections (96-99). The last of these describes the anniversary of Arthur's death. It is notable that in the last two lines of this, the poet feels for the first time drawn out of the egotism of grief towards sympathy with sufferers all over the world. There follow four sections (100-103) describing the departure of the Tennysons from Somersby. 103 describes a dream which is in part symbolic of Tennyson's passage through life to join his friend and in part expressive of the more hopeful feelings with which he leaves his old secluded life for a new home (in Epping Forest) which is to bring him closer to the broad stream of human existence.

²Arthur Hallam.

³The reference is to Exodus, ch. 19, v. 6, describing Moses' communion with God on Mount Sinai, while the Israelites were worshipping the Golden Calf below: "and it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightning and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud".

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;
 He finds on misty mountain-ground
 His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
 I look'd on these and thought of thee
 In vastness and in mystery,
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,
 Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
 Their meetings made December June,
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
 The days she never can forget
 Are earnest that he loves her yet,
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,
 Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
 He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
 He reads the secret of the star,
 He seems so near and yet so far,
 He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
 A wither'd violet is her bliss:
 She knows not what his greatness is,
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
 Of early faith and plighted vows;
 She knows but matters of the house,
 And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
 She darkly feels him great and wise,
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
 'I cannot understand: I love.'

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
 And those fair hills I sail'd below,
 When I was there with him; and go
 By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
 That City. All her splendour seems
 No livelier than the wisp¹ that gleams
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
 Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me:
 I have not seen, I will not see
 Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
 The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend
 Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
 By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
 Her shadow on the blaze of kings:
 And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
 With statelier progress to and fro
 The double tides of chariots flow
 By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
 He told me, lives in any crowd,
 When all is gay with lamps, and loud
 With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
 And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
 The rocket molten into flakes
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

¹The *wisp* is the will-o-the-wisp which the poet imagines dancing on the waters of the infernal River Lethe (the river of Forgetfulness) watched by the eyes of the dead.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 So loud with voices of the birds,
 So thick with lowings of the herds,
 Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
 On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
 By meadows breathing of the past,
 And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
 A song that slights the coming care,
 And Autumn laying here and there
 A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
 To myriads on the genial earth,
 Memories of bridal, or of birth,
 And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,¹
 Today they count as kindred souls;
 They know me not, but mourn with me.

I climb the hill: from end to end
 Of all the landscape underneath,
 I find no place that does not breathe
 Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
 Or low morass and whispering reed,
 Or simple stile from mead to mead,
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
 That hears the latest linnet trill,
 Nor quarry trench'd along the hill
 And haunted by the wrangling daw;

¹The ends of the earth's axis (at the North and South Poles) move so slowly, as the earth rotates, that they seem not to move at all.

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
 Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
 To left and right thro' meadowy curves,
 That feed the mothers of the flock;
 But each has pleased a kindred eye,
 And each reflects a kindlier day;
 And, leaving these, to pass away,
 I think once more he seems to die.

101

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,
 The tender blossom flutter down,
 Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
 This maple burn itself away;
 Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
 Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
 And many a rose-carnation feed
 With summer spice the humming air;
 Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
 The brook shall babble down the plain,
 At noon or when the lesser wain¹
 Is twisting round the polar star;
 Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
 And flood the haunts of hern and crake;
 Or into silver arrows break
 The sailing moon in creek and cove;
 Till from the garden and the wild
 A fresh association blow,
 And year by year the landscape grow
 Familiar to the stranger's child;
 As year by year the labourer tills
 His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;
 And year by year our memory fades
 From all the circle of the hills.

102

We leave the well-beloved place
 Where first we gazed upon the sky;
 The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,
 Will shelter one of stranger race.

¹The *lesser wain* is the constellation, *Ursa Minor*. It appears to rotate about the pole-star, which is part of it.

We go, but ere we go from home,
 As down the garden-walks I move,
 Two spirits of a diverse love
 Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung
 Long since its matin song, and heard
 The low love-language of the bird
 In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here
 Thy feet have stray'd in after hours
 With thy lost friend among the bowers,
 And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,
 And each prefers his separate claim,
 Poor rivals in a losing game,
 That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set
 To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
 They mix in one another's arms
 To one pure image of regret.

103

On that last night before we went
 From out the doors where I was bred,
 I dream'd a vision of the dead,
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
 And maidens with me: distant hills
 From hidden summits fed with rills
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
 They sang of what is wise and good
 And graceful. In the centre stood
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
 The shape of him I loved, and love
 For ever: then flew in a dove
 And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go
 They wept and wail'd, but led the way
 To where a little shallop lay
 At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
 And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
 We glided winding under ranks
 Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore
 And roll'd the floods in grander space,
 The maidens gather'd strength and grace
 And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
 And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;
 I felt the thews of Anakim,
 The pulses of a Titan's heart:

As one would sing the death of war,
 And one would chant the history
 Of that great race, which is to be,
 And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
 Began to foam, and we to draw
 From deep to deep, to where we saw
 A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
 But thrice as large as man he bent
 To greet us. Up the side I went,
 And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind
 Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:
 'We served thee here,' they said, 'so long,
 And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
 An answer from my lips, but he
 Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
 And go with us': they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud
 That landlike slept along the deep.

104¹

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
 The moon is hid, the night is still;
 A single church² below the hill
 Is peeling, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
 That wakens at this hour of rest
 A single murmur in the breast,
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
 In lands where not a memory strays,
 Nor landmark breathes of other days,
 But all is new unhallow'd ground.

105

To-night ungather'd let us leave
 This laurel, let this holly stand:
 We live within the stranger's land,
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
 And silent under other snows:
 There in due time the woodbine³ blows,
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
 The genial hour with mask and mime;
 For change of place, like growth of time
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

¹104-106 describe Christmas and New Year in the new home. For the chronology here, see page 289. The poet turns from the past sadly but hopefully and looks forward to a better future for mankind and a truer and broader Christianity (last line of 106). Even Arthur's birthday, Feb. 1st (107), cannot shake his new resolution to renounce profitless brooding (108) and join the broad stream of human life. In the six sections which follow (109-114) he is able to dwell, almost serenely, on Arthur's ability, goodness and charm and on the great service which he would have rendered to humanity in the dangerous years ahead with their threats of political upheaval and their menace of rapid and uncontrolled increase of scientific knowledge (114).

²Waltham Abbey.

³Tennyson pronounced this "woodbin".

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly proved,
 A little spare the night I loved,
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
 For who would keep an ancient form
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;
 No dance, no motion, save alone
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead
 The closing cycle rich in good.

106

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:
 The year is dying in the night;
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
 The year is going, let him go;
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more;
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
 And ancient forms of party strife;
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the times;
 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
 The civic slander and the spite;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

107

It is the day when he was born,
 A bitter day that early sank
 Behind a purple-frosty bank
 Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
 The blast of North and East, and ice
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
 Above the wood which grides and clangs
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
 To darken on the rolling brine
 That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
 Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
 To make a solid core of heat;
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
 Of all things ev'n as he were by;

We keep the day.¹ With festal cheer,
 With books and music, surely we
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

¹It has been suggested that this punctuation here is wrong, that there should be a comma after "day" and a full stop after "music" in the next line. But the existing punctuation is as in the first edition.

108

I will not shut me from my kind,
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,
 I will not eat my heart alone,
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind.

What profit lies in barren faith,
 And vacant yearning, tho' with might
 To scale the heaven's highest height,
 Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
 But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
 And on the depths of death there swims
 The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
 Of sorrow under human skies:
 'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
 Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

109

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
 From household fountains never dry;
 The critic clearness of an eye,
 That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
 To seize and throw the doubts of man;
 Impassion'd logic, which outran
 The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
 But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;
 And passion pure in snowy bloom
 Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
 Of freedom in her regal seat
 Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
 The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
 In such a sort, the child would twine
 A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
 And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
 Have look'd on; if they look'd in vain,
 My shame is greater who remain,
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

110

Thy converse drew us with delight,
 The men of rathe¹ and riper years:
 The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
 Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
 The proud was half disarm'd of pride,
 Nor cared the serpent at thy side
 To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
 The flippant put himself to school
 And heard thee, and the brazen fool
 Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
 And felt thy triumph was as mine;
 And loved them more, that they were thine,
 The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
 But mine the love that will not tire,
 And, born of love, the vague desire
 That spurs an imitative will.

111

The churl in spirit, up or down
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
 To him who grasps a golden ball,
 By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
 His want in forms for fashion's sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories call,
 Not being less but more than all
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

¹Early.

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower
 And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,
 Drew in the expression of an eye,
 Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
 The grand old name of gentleman,
 Defamed by every charlatan,
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

112

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
 That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
 On glorious insufficiencies,
 Set light by narrower perfectness.¹

But thou, that fillest all the room
 Of all my love, art reason why
 I seem to cast a careless eye
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,
 And hope could never hope too much,
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
 And tracts of calm from tempest made,
 And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
 In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

113

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
 Which not alone had guided me,
 But served the seasons that may rise;

¹The meaning of this stanza is much debated. I think Hallam Lord Tennyson's explanation must be accepted: superior people criticize the Poet because he is indulgent to unaccomplished greatness like Arthur's while making light of narrower natures more perfect in their small way.

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
 In intellect, with force and skill
 To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
 A soul on highest mission sent,
 A potent voice of Parliament,
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
 Becoming, when the time has birth,
 A lever to uplift the earth
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
 With agonies, with energies,
 With overthrowings, and with cries,
 And undulations to and fro.

II4

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
 Against her beauty? May she mix
 With men and prosper! Who shall fix
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
 She sets her forward countenance
 And leaps into the future chance,
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
 She cannot fight the fear of death.
 What is she, cut from love and faith,
 But some wild Pallas¹ from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
 All barriers in her onward race
 For power. Let her know her place;
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
 If all be not in vain; and guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by side
 With wisdom, like the younger child:

¹Pallas Athene, the Greek goddess of wisdom, was said to have sprung fully grown and fully armed from the brain of Zeus, ruler of the gods.

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
 O, friend, who camest to thy goal
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and hour
 In reverence and in charity.

115¹

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares, and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
 To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too; and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

¹In the spring poems of the preceding year (83 and 86) the Poet called on the season to help his spirit to burst through the frost of sorrow. He now feels his spirit blossoming with the life of the world, "re-orient out of dust" (115 and 116). The function of time now seems to be to prepare him for a mystical reunion with his friend (117). This leads him on to think of the evolutionary function of time. As the human race has evolved from lower forms, so the individual can evolve spiritually in his narrow span of life and afterwards. Underlying is the thought that he himself may evolve into a worthy companion for Arthur in the spiritual life. The group closes (110) with a second visit to Arthur's old home in Wimpole St. (cf. 7). Now, however, the poet no longer thinks of "a hand that can be clasped no more", but feels in his spirit a mystic handclasp which scarcely evokes a sigh for the lost physical relation. It is remarkable that these and other passages of *In Memoriam* in which the idea of Evolution is outlined, were written many years before the publication of *The Origin of Species* and probably even before Chambers's *Vestiges of Creation*.

116

Is it, then, regret for buried time
 That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
 And meets the year, and gives and takes
 The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
 The life re-orient out of dust,
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
 Upon me, while I must alone;
 And that dear voice, I once have known,
 Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune dead;
 Less yearning for the friendship fled,
 Than some strong bond which is to be.

117

O days and hours, your work is this
 To hold me from my proper place,
 A little while from his embrace,
 For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
 And unto meeting when we meet,
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
 And every span of shade that steals,
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,
 And all the courses of the suns.¹

118²

Contemplate all this work of Time,
 The giant labouring in his youth;
 Nor dream of human love and truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime;

¹This stanza describes the measurement of Time. First the hour glass, then the sun-dial, then the clock and last the sun itself.

²This section (stanzas 4 and 5) suggests that man can progress in two ways, either by gradual self-development, or if circumstances are against this, by converting woes into glories and forging character from calamity.

But trust that those we call the dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They say,
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
 Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course, and show
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
 Move upward, working out the beast,
 And let the ape and tiger die.

119

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, not as one that weeps
 I come once more; the city sleeps;
 I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
 Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
 And bright the friendship of thine eye;
 And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
 I take the pressure of thine hand.

120¹

I trust I have not wasted breath:
 I think we are not wholly brain,
 Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
 Let Science prove we are, and then
 What matters Science unto men,
 At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
 Hereafter, up from childhood shape
 His action like the greater ape,
 But I was *born* to other things.

121

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
 And ready, thou, to die with him,
 Thou watchest all things ever dim
 And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
 The boat is drawn upon the shore;
 Thou listenest to the closing door,
 And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
 By thee the world's great work is heard
 Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
 Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,
 And voices hail it from the brink;
 Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
 And see'st the moving of the team.

¹The poet prepares for his final sequence with a group (120-125) of six very slightly connected poems. In 120 and 123 he insists once more that the essence of man is spiritual and the spiritual the only reality (120). 121 carries the thought that as the evening star, which is also the star of love, becomes the morning star so death and sorrow brighten into life and hope. In 122 he calls on Arthur to renew the experience of mystical communion—perhaps that described in 95—thus establishing that death and life are one. In 124 he makes it clear (as in stanza 5 of the introduction) that these convictions are not susceptible of proof but can only be grasped by faith. In 125 he claims that even in his bitterest moments love and hope have never been dead and that he will never lose them until the time comes for his severance from the mechanism of mortal life and reunion with his friend.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
 For what is one, the first, the last,
 Thou, like my present and my past,
 Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

122

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
 While I rose up against my doom,
 And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,
 To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
 The strong imagination roll
 A sphere of stars about my soul,
 In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
 Divide us not, be with me now,
 And enter in at breast and brow,
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
 And like an inconsiderate boy,
 As in the former flash of joy,
 I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
 And every dew-drop paints a bow,
 The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
 And every thought breaks out a rose.

123

There rolls the deep where grew the tree,
 O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
 There where the long street roars, hath been
 The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
 From form to form, and nothing stands;
 They melt like mist, the solid lands,
 Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
 And dream my dream, and hold it true;
 For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
 I cannot think the thing farewell.

124

That which we dare invoke to bless;
 Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
 He, They, One, All; within, without;
 The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
 Nor thro' the questions men may try,
 The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
 I heard a voice 'believe no more'
 And heard an ever-breaking shore
 That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
 The freezing reason's colder part,
 And like a man in wrath the heart
 Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
 But that blind clamour made me wise;
 Then was I as a child that cries,
 But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
 What is, and no man understands;
 And out of darkness came the hands
 That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

125

Whatever I have said or sung,
 Some bitter notes my harp would give,
 Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
 A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;
 She did but look through dimmer eyes;
 Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,
 Because he felt so fix'd in truth:

And if the song were full of care,
 He breathed the spirit of the song;
 And if the words were sweet and strong
 He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
 To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
 And this electric force, that keeps
 A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

126¹

Love is and was my Lord and King,
 And in his presence I attend
 To hear the tidings of my friend,
 Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
 And will be, tho' as yet I keep
 Within his court on earth, and sleep
 Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to place,
 And whispers to the worlds of space,
 In the deep night, that all is well.

127

And all is well, tho' faith and form
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
 Well roars the storm to those that hear
 A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
 And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
 The red fool-fury of the Seine
 Should pile her barricades with dead.*

¹126-131. The final sequence. In 126 the poet reaffirms his faith in Love as Lord of the Universe (*cf.* Introduction, Stanza 1). He knows that all is well between himself and Arthur and (127) that all is well with the world, in spite of the general decay of faith and the menace of political upheaval. Faith which can transcend personal suffering can (128) also transcend the dangers threatening humanity. Arthur, tho' he has passed beyond his understanding, mingles with all his hopes for the future of mankind and in all his apprehension of Nature and of God through Nature. His love for the departed friend, instead of becoming weaker as the sense of human personality dissolves, becomes actually more intense and more absorbing. In the last section (131), Tennyson appeals to an equally transcendental conception, that of free will (*cf.* Introduction 4th stanza). This is a derivation from the divine will and yet in some sense subject to man's control. Without it man cannot achieve the faith necessary to carry him through the trials of mortality to the final reunion.

"With all we loved and all we flow from, soul in soul".

*This stanza probably refers to the first French Revolution, the three days' fighting in July, 1830, which led to the fall of Charles X, and the street fighting of 1848.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
 And him, the lazar, in his rags:
 They tremble, the sustaining crags;
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
 The fortress crashes from on high,
 The brute earth lightens to the sky,
 And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;
 While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
 And smilest, knowing all is well.

128

The love that rose on stronger wings,
 Unpalsied when he met with Death,
 Is comrade of the lesser faith
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
 Of onward time shall yet be made,
 And throned races may degrade;
 Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
 If all your office had to do
 With old results that look like new;
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
 To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
 To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old bareness picturesque
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
 On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

129

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal;
 O loved the most, when most I feel
 There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
 Loved deeper, darker understood;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

130

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
 I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

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O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquer'd years
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,¹
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years: they went and came,
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy look
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

¹The Epilogue refers to the marriage of Cecilia Tennyson to Edmund Lushington, Professor of Latin at Glasgow University and afterwards Lord Rector of the University (Oct. 10, 1842).

O when her life was yet in bud,
 He too foretold the perfect rose.
 For thee she grew, for thee she grows
 For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
 As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
 Consistent; wearing all that weight
 Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
 And I must give away the bride;
 She fears not, or with thee beside
 And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
 That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,
 That shielded all her life from harm
 At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
 Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
 Their pensive tablets round her head,
 And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
 The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again
 The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of twain
 Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
 Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
 By village eyes as yet unborn;
 The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
 The joy to every wandering breeze;
 The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
 Await them. Many a merry face
 Salutes them—maidens of the place,
 That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
 With him to whom her hand I gave.
 They leave the porch, they pass the grave
 That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favour'd horses wait;
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapour sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,
 And o'er the friths that branch and spread
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
 And breaking let the splendour fall
 To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the vast
 And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, a closer link
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge; under whose command
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
 Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
 For all we thought and loved and did,
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
 Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
 This planet, was a noble type
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,
 That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and lives,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation moves.

Locksley Hall and Sixty Years After

LOCKSLEY HALL

Tennyson thought that this poem and that which follows it were likely to be considered two of the most interesting of his works as depicting the tone of the age at two distant periods of his life. The former is in the 1830s when the first railways were being built and the Reform Bill passed and the rapid developments in science and politics were causing a surge of excitement and optimism. The latter is in the 1880s when the spirit of Rationalism had seriously undermined Religious faith and there was a growing disappointment with the practical results of the extension of the franchise and the applications of scientific discovery.

The speaker in the two poems is the same, in the first, a sensitive, excitable and self-centred youth, who has been jilted by his cousin Amy in favour of a sporting squire. His consequent mood of depression is contrasted with and ultimately yields to the spirit of hopefulness and energy characteristic of the time.

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-
horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would
be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong;'

Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falsar than all fancy fathoms, falsar than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee
down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel
force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with
wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought:
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter
thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy
proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was
loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter
fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should
come
As the many-winter'd crow¹ that leads the clanging rookery
home.

¹Tennyson, who was an excellent naturalist, very well knew the difference between a crow and a rook, but the names were interchangeable in Lincolnshire.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she speak and move:
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly: love is love evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to
proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the
wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and
fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt
weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom
years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not
exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffer'd—Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like
these?

Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are laid
with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honour feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would
yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something
new:
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they
shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heaven's fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly
dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing
warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-
storm;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were
furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

'There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in
awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced
eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint:
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to
point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the
suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Thro' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers,¹ and I linger on the
shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden
breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

¹Cf. the introductory lines to *The Palace of Art*, page 99 and *In Memoriam* 114. Tennyson early foresaw the danger of scientific knowledge uncontrolled by moral purpose

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure,
woman's pain—

Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower
brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with
mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle¹ fell my father evil-starr'd;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from
the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited
tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of
mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake
mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and
breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

¹The *Mahratta Confederation* of five Indian Rajahs was finally defeated
by Lord Hastings in 1818.

Iron jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the
brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child:

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in
Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of
change.¹

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun:
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the
Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and holt
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

¹This line was made in the early 1830s. When Tennyson, who was very shortsighted, first travelled by train, he thought that the wheels ran in grooves, not with flanges over the rails.

LOCKSLEY HALL, SIXTY YEARS AFTER

The hero of the first Locksley Hall is now a very old man. He has come back to the Hall for the funeral of his old rival, Amy's husband, and to meet his own grandson, who is heir to the estate and has been jilted in his turn. Amy has died long since. Edith, his own wife, married some years after his parting from Amy, is also dead, and his only son, the boy's father, has been drowned at sea. The old man is still as fiery and voluble as in youth. He rails against the materialism of the age, the demagoguery of politicians, the corruption of contemporary literature and the general vulgarization of art and life. But the old optimism has not entirely vanished. He feels that the world is still young, and believes, in spite of all, that 'Love will conquer at the last'. Meanwhile, he has come to realize much of his own weakness and folly and to know that Amy's husband, stolid and unimaginative as he may have been, has led a more useful life than his own, striving to do his best by his estate and the men, women and children dependent on it. See Introduction, page 48.

Late, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy
tracts,
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,
I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall.

So—your happy suit was blasted—she the faultless, the divine;
And you liken—boyish babble—this boy-love of yours with
mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;
Babble, babble; our old England may go down in babble at last.

'Curse him!' curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your
rage?
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise;
I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—Amy's arms about my neck—
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had
flown;
I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.¹

¹This and the preceding three lines, written fifty years before, were the nucleus of the whole poem.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake?
You, not you! your modern amourist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child;
But your Judith—but your worldling—*she* had never driven me
wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of Spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,
While she vows 'till death shall part us,' she the would-be-
widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings—father, mother—be
content,
Ev'n the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem in his
pride;
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he
died.

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have stood,
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt in prayer,
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of Locksley
—there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,
Lies my Amy dead in child-birth, dead the mother, dead the
child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now—
I this old white-headed dreamer stoopt and kiss'd her marble
brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, passionate
tears,
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawn-
ing years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fall'n away.
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel
stones,
All his virtues—I forgive them—black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,
She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender feet,

Very woman of every woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,
She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wander'd down the coast,
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard, early lost at sea;
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own.

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was
brave;
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the
grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but kept the deck,
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking
wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no—for since our dying race began,
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and slew the wife
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the
night;
Ev'n the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the
Pure, the Just—
Take the charm 'For ever' from them, and they crumble into
dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,' lost within a growing
gloom;
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into commonest common-
place!

'Forward' rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till ten thousand years have
gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings would flay
Captives whom they caught in battle—iron-hearted victors they.

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,
Timur, built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls,

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English
names,
Christian conquerors took and flung the conquer'd Christian
into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the
great;
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen
hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coin'd himself a
curse:
Rome of Caesar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller? which was
worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gospel, all
men's good;
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the light with
blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the dawn begun—
Crown'd with sunlight—over darkness—from the still unrisen
sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?
Kill your enemy, for you hate him,' still, 'your enemy' was a
man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless horse,
and drive
Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive.¹

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers—burnt at midnight,
found at morn,
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we men?
Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again,

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers
Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—whose pains are hardly less
than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for
your friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour
will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be wise:
When was age so cramm'd with menace? madness? written,
spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,
Cries to Weakest as to Strongest, 'Ye are equals, equal-born.'

Equal-born? O yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.
Charm us, Orator, till the Lion look no larger than the Cat,

Till the Cat thro' that mirage of overheated language loom
Larger than the Lion,—Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her? shall we
yield?

Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the
field.

¹These lines refer to the outrages committed in Ireland during the land-agitations.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,
Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of
the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true.

Plowmen, Shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and
still could find
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;
So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game;
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her
name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe, known to all;
Step by step we rose to greatness,—thro' the tonguesters we
may fall.

You that woo the Voices—tell them 'old experience is a fool,'
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot read can
rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones in their
place;
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the yelling
street,
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without the hope,
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their ruins
down the slope.

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymester, play your
part,
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of Art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare;
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—forward—naked
—let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your
sewer;
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue
pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism,—
Forward, forward, ay and backward, downward too into the
abysm.

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men;
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken at your lawless din,
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the newer world
begin.

Heated am I? you—you wonder—well, it scarce becomes mine
age—
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall asleep?
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts, for I am
gray:
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems, Kingdoms and Republics
fall,
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and
Truth;
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt, or deaf or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?—

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd,
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd.

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her thousands
millions, then—
All her harvest all too narrow—who can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon?
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the
moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. . . . On this day and at this
hour,
In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley
tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting—Amy—sixty years ago—
She and I—the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now—
Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the seeming-
deathless vow. . . .

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the dune, the
grass!
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this earthlier earth of ours,
Closer on the Sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good
things.
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect
kings.

Hesper—Venus—were we native to that splendour or in Mars,
We should see the Globe we groan in, fairest of their evening
stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust
and spite,
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light?

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so silver-fair,
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, 'Would to God that
we were there'?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable
sea,
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me.

All the suns—are these but symbols of innumerable man,
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?
Well be grateful for the sounding watchword 'Evolution' here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king of sacred
song;
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother insect wrong,

While the silent Heavens roll, and Suns along their fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day.

Many an Æon¹ moulded earth before her highest, man, was born,
Many an Æon too may pass when earth is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded—pools of salt, and plots of
land—
Shallow skin of green and azure—chains of mountain, grains of
sand!

Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human
eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human
soul;
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole.

• • • • •

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-guarded gate.
Not to-night in Locksley Hall—to-morrow—you, you come so
late.

Wreck'd—your train—or all but wreck'd? a shatter'd wheel? a
vicious boy!
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish you joy?

¹Age.

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'forward,' yours are hope and youth,
but I
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night;
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of Even? light the glimmer of the dawn?
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson! Death and Silence hold their own.
Leave the Master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,
Kindly landlord, boon companion—youthful jealousy is a liar.

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain.
Let the trampled serpent show you that you have not lived in vain.

Youthfull youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village—Art and Grace are less and
less:

Science grows and Beauty dwindles—roofs of slated hideousness!

There is one old Hostel left us where they swing the Locksley
shield,

Till the peasant cow shall butt the 'Lion passant' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry, passing
hence,

In the common deluge drowning old political common-sense!

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled!
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years.

* * * * *

In this Hostel!—I remember—I repent it o'er his grave—
Like a clown—by chance he met me—I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the mouldering
bricks—

I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six—

While I sheltered in this archway from a day of driving showers—
Peep the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers.

Here to-night! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the Chapel
bell!

Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, 'I have loved thee well.'

Then a peal that shakes the portal—one has come to claim his
bride,

Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and started from
my side—

Silent echoes! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the
way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother men,
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and
drain'd the fen.

TENNYSON'S POETICAL WORKS

Hears he now the Voice that wrong'd him? who shall swear it
cannot be?

Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he.

Ere she gain her Heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the
game:

Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of the Will.

Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine.
Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—for man can half-control his
doom—

Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the Past.
I that loathed, have come to love him. Love will conquer at
the last.

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear the pall;
Then I leave thee Lord and Master, latest Lord of Locksley Hall.

1886

Maud

MAUD; A MONODRAMA

The story of this poem is told in a lyrical monologue in which the speaker unfolds his reactions to its tragic events. He is a young man, who has been left an orphan at an early age, his father having died, probably by his own hand, after losing his fortune through an unfortunate speculation. The wealthy neighbour, who inveigled him into the speculation, has grown even richer as the result. The young man's mother has died in poverty and wretchedness, and he has lived on in the old house brooding over his wrongs, with which the wrongs and iniquities of contemporary England become linked in his mind. The rich neighbour, who has been away from England for some years, comes back to his manor house with his daughter Maud who, while the friendship between the two families continued, had been intended for the young man's bride (Part 1 (VII)). They fall in love; her brother opposes the match; a duel results, in which the brother is killed. Maud's lover flies to France, where his brain gradually gives way. He is haunted by the memory of what he has done and by a phantasm of Maud, which "moves with the moving eye" wherever he directs his gaze. Then he hears (Part 2 (III)) that Maud has died and lapses into complete madness (Part 2 (IV to XI)). When at last he recovers his reason (Part 3) he finds salvation and reintegration of spirit by volunteering for the Crimean War. This part of the poem has been very much criticized, but those who remember 1914 must be struck by an extraordinary similarity in the reactions of many of our young men who volunteered for service against Germany at that time.

Tennyson, no doubt, sympathized with many of the opinions which he puts into the mouth of Maud's lover, but the whole poem is couched in extravagant language, expressive of the neurotic fancy of the narrator, and not entirely characteristic of the poet. See Introduction, page 36.

Part One

I

I

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death.'

2

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life—O father! O God! was it well?—
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

3

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation
 had fail'd,
 And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with
 despair,
 And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

4

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd
 By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,
 And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I
 heard
 The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

5

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
 Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:
 But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
 Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and
 drain'd.

6

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them
 a curse,
 Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
 And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
 Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearth-
 stone?

7

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
 When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or
 his word?
 Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
 The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

8

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
 Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope nor trust;
 May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
 Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are ashes and
 dust.

9

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
 When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like
 swine.

When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

10

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

11

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

12

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

13

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of
the foam,
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his
counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand,
home.—

14

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

15

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love* in the passionate
shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and
speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

16

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the
main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

17

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire:
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

18

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish
escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the
grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of
all,—

19

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the
worse.
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savour nor salt,
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of
spleen.

III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before

Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
 Listening now to the tide in his broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the
 wave,
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

IV

I

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
 In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

2

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar;
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;
 But sorrow seizes me if ever that light be my leading star!

3

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd:
 I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor;
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

4

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way:
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the
 shrike,
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and
 prey.

5

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a
 game
 That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's
 shame;
 However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

6

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
 And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
 As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
 So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:
 He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

7

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
 An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;
 The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.
 I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;
 For not to desire or admire, if a man can learn it, were more
 Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

8

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
 Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them
 about?
 Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
 Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or with knout?
 I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

9

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
 Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
 From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing
 dispraise
 Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
 Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and the measureless ill.
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

V

I

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

2

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

3

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI

I

Morning arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd
Caught and cuffed by the gale:
I had fancied it would be fair.

2

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet,
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

3

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

4

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silver net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

5

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?

Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

6

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
'To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yestermorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

7

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

8

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,

Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

9

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstand?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendour, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

10

I have play'd with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII

I

Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair?

2

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me;
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

3

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night?

+

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me;
'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

VIII

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd
'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone:
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
Then returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X

I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendour plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head?

Whose old grandfather has lately died,
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
 Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
 And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
 Master of half a servile shire,
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold
 To a grandson, first of his noble line,
 Rich in the grace all women desire,
 Strong in the power that all men adore,
 And simper and set their voices lower,
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
 New as his title, built last year,
 There amid perky larches and pine,
 And over the sullen-purple moor
 (Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

2

What, has he found my jewel out?
 For one of the two that rode at her side
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
 Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
 Maud could be gracious too, no doubt
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
 A bought commission, a waxen face,
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
 Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
 And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
 A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
 At war with myself and a wretched race,
 Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

3

Last week came one to the county town,
 To preach our poor little army down,
 And play the game of the despot kings,
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well:
 This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,
 Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and rings
 Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
 This huckster put down war! can he tell
 Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
 Put down the passions that make earth Hell!

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
 Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
 The bitter springs of anger and fear;
 Down too, down at your own fireside,
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
 For each is at war with mankind.

4

I wish I could hear again
 The chivalrous battle-song
 That she warbled alone in her joy!
 I might persuade myself then
 She would not do herself this great wrong,
 To take a wanton dissolute boy
 For a man and leader of men.

5

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
 Like some of the simple great ones gone
 For ever and ever by,
 One still strong man in a blatant land,
 Whatever they call him, what care I,
 Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
 Who can rule and dare not lie.

6

And ah for a man to arise in me,
 That the man I am may cease to be!

XI

I

O let the solid ground
 Not fail beneath my feet
 Before my life has found
 What some have found so sweet;
 'Then let come what come may,
 What matter if I go mad,
 I shall have had my day.

2

Let the sweet heavens endure,
 Not close and darken above me
 Before I am quite quite sure
 That there is one to love me;

Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII

I

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

2

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

3

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

4

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen
But she is tall and stately.

5

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favour!
O Maud were sure of Heaven
If lowliness could save her.

6

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

7

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
One is come to woo her.

8

Look, a horse at the door,
And little Kin; Charley snarling,
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII

I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vexed with his pride!
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

2

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past him he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonised me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

3

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:
'Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due

To the sweeter blood by the other side;
 Her mother has been a thing complete,
 However she came to be so allied.
 And fair without, faithful within,
 Maud to him is nothing akin:
 Some peculiar mystic grace
 Made her only the child of her mother,
 And heap'd the whole inherited sin
 On that huge scapegoat of the race,
 All, all upon the brother.

4

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
 Has not his sister smiled on me?

XIV

I

Maud has a garden of roses
 And lilies fair on a lawn;
 There she walks in her state
 And tends upon bed and bower,
 And thither I climb'd at dawn
 And stood by her garden-gate;
 A lion ramps at the top,
 He is claspt by a passion-flower.

2

Maud's own little oak-room
 (Which Maud, like a precious stone
 Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
 Lights with herself, when alone
 She sits by her music and books
 And her brother lingers late
 With a roystering company) looks
 Upon Maud's own garden-gate:
 And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white
 As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
 On the hasp of the window, and my Delight
 Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to glide,
 Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to my side,
 There were but a step to be made.

3

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

4

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;
But I look'd, and round, all round the house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the sleep of
death.

XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if *I* be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much to fear;
But if *I* be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else.

XVI

I

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week:
But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,

O this is the day!
 O beautiful creature, what am I
 That I dare to look her way;
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
 And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
 From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
 To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
 And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,
 To know her beauty might half undo it.
 I know it the one bright thing to save
 My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

2

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,
 Dare I bid her abide by her word?
 Should I love her so well if she
 Had given her word to a thing so low?
 Shall I love her as well if she
 Can break her word were it even for me?
 I trust that it is not so.

3

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
 For I must tell her before we part,
 I must tell her, or die.

XVII

Go not, happy day,
 , From the shining fields,
 Go not, happy day,
 Till the maiden yields.
 Rosy is the West,
 Rosy is the South,
 Roses are her cheeks,
 And a rose her mouth.
 When the happy Yes
 Falters from her lips,
 Pass and blush the news
 Over glowing ships;

Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII

1

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

2

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

3

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head

Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
 And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
 And over whom thy darkness must have spread
 With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
 Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
 Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she came.

4

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
 And you fair stars that crown a happy day
 Go in and out as if at merry play,
 Who am no more so all forlorn,
 As when it seem'd far better to be born
 To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,
 Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
 A sad astrology, the boundless plan
 That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
 Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
 Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
 His nothingness into man.

5

But now shine on, and what care I,
 Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
 The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
 And do accept my madness, and would die
 To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

6

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
 More life to Love than is or ever was
 In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
 Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
 It seems that I am happy, that to me
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

7

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
 And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
 O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,
 Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
 'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear.'

8

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
 And hark the clock within, the silver knell
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
 And died to live, long as my pulses play;
 But now by this my love has closed her sight
 And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
 To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
 Among the fragments of the golden day.
 May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
 Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
 My bride to be, my evermore delight,
 My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
 It is but for a little space I go:
 And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
 Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
 Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
 Of your soft splendours that you look so bright?
 I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
 Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
 Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
 That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:
 Let all be well, be well.

XIX

I

Her brother is coming back to-night,
 Breaking up my dream of delight.

2

My dream? do I dream of bliss?
 I have walk'd awake with Truth.
 O when did a morning shine
 So rich in atonement as this
 For my dark-dawning youth,
 Darken'd watching a mother decline
 And that dead man at her heart and mine:
 For who was left to watch her but I?
 Yet so did I let my freshness die.

3

I trust that I did not talk
 To gentle Maud in our walk
 (For often in lonely wanderings
 I have cursed him even to lifeless things)
 But I trust that I did not talk,
 Not touch on her father's sin:
 I am sure I did but speak
 Of my mother's faded cheek
 When it slowly grew so thin,
 That I felt she was slowly dying
 Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt:
 For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,
 Shaking her head at her son and sighing
 A world of trouble within!

4

And Maud too, Maud was moved
 To speak of the mother she loved
 As one scarce less forlorn,
 Dying abroad and it seems apart
 From him who had ceased to share her heart,
 And ever mourning over the feud,
 The household Fury sprinkled with blood
 By which our houses are torn:
 How strange was what she said,
 When only Maud and the brother
 Hung over her dying bed—
 That Maud's dark father and mine
 Had bound us one to the other,
 Betrothed us over their wine,
 On the day when Maud was born;
 Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.
 Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death.
 Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

5

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
 To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
 That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet:
 And none of us thought of a something beyond,
 A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,
 As it were a duty done to the tomb,
 To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled;

And I was cursing them and my doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run wild
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
Of foreign churches—I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled!

6

But then what a flint is he!
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown.
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before;
And this was what had reddened her cheek
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

7

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him.
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

8

Kind? but the deathbed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—
Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind: why let it be so:
For shall not Maud have her will?

9

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget

That I owe this debt to you
 And for your sweet sake to yours;
 O then, what then shall I say?—
 If ever I *should* forget,
 May God make me more wretched
 Than ever I have been yet!

10

So now I have sworn to bury
 All this dead body of hate,
 I feel so free and so clear
 By the loss of that dead weight,
 That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
 Fantastically merry;
 But that her brother comes, like a blight
 On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX

I

Strange, that I felt so gay,
 Strange, that I tried to-day
 To beguile her melancholy;
 The Sultan, as we name him,—
 She did not wish to blame him—
 But he vexed her and perplexed her
 With his worldly talk and folly:
 Was it gentle to reprove her
 For stealing out of view
 From a little lazy lover
 Who but claims her as his due?
 Or for chilling his caresses
 By the coldness of her manners,
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses?
 Now I know her but in two,
 Nor can pronounce upon it
 If one should ask me whether
 The habit, hat, and feather,
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
 Be the neater and completer;
 For nothing can be sweeter
 Than maiden Maud in either.

2

But to-morrow, if we live,
 Our ponderous squire will give

A grand political dinner
 To half the squirelings near;
 And Maud will wear her jewels,
 And the bird of prey will hover,
 And the titmouse hope to win her
 With his chirrup at her ear.

3

A grand political dinner
 To the men of many acres,
 A gathering of the Tory,
 A dinner and then a dance
 For the maids and marriage-makers,
 And every eye but mine will glance
 At Maud in all her glory.

4

For I am not invited,
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,
 I am all as well delighted,
 For I know her own rose-garden,
 And mean to linger in it
 Till the dancing will be over;
 And then, oh then, come out to me
 For a minute, but for a minute,
 Come out to your own true lover,
 That your true lover may see
 Your glory also, and render
 All homage to his own darling,
 Queen Maud in all her splendour.

XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,
 And bringing me down from the Hall
 This garden-rose that I found,
 Forgetful of Maud and me,
 And lost in trouble and moving round
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
 And trying to pass to the sea;
 O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
 My Maud has sent it by thee
 (If I read her sweet will right)
 On a blushing mission to me,
 Saying in odour and colour, 'Ah, be
 Among the roses to-night.'

XXII

I

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

2

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

3

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

4

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play.'
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

5

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine,' so I swear to the rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.'

6

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

7

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

8

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

9

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

10

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near';
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late';
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear';
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

II

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
 Were it ever so airy a tread,
 My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it carth in an earthy bed;
 My dust would hear her and beat,
 Had I lain for a century dead;
 Would start and tremble under her feet,
 And blossom in purple and red.

Part Two

I

I

'The fault was mine, the fault was mine'—
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—
 It is this guilty hand!—
 And there rises ever a passionate cry
 From underneath in the darkening land—
 What is it, that has been done?
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,
 The fires of Hell and of Hate;
 For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
 When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,
 He came with the babe-faced lord;
 Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
 And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
 He fiercely gave me the lie,
 Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
 And he struck me, madman, over the face,
 Struck me before the languid fool,
 Who was gaping and grinning by:
 Struck for himself an evil stroke;
 Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe;
 For front to front in an hour we stood,
 And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
 From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,
 And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless code,
 'That must have life for a blow.
 Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.
 Was it he lay there with a fading eye?
 'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly!'

Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood:
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

2

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,
The little hearts that know not how to forgive:
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust;
We are not worthy to live.

II

1

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

2

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

3

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

4

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

5

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main—
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

6

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech¹ is mine.

7

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part—
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

¹See Genesis, ch. 4. v. 23.

8

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,—
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It is his mother's hair.

9

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the seal
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

III

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou are left for ever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

IV

I

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

2

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than anything on earth.

3

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee:
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

4

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

5

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

6

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendour falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

7

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

8

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

9

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapours choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

10

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

11

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

12

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest'?

13

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me:
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

V

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamour and rumble, and ringing and clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so;
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

2

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read;
It is that which makes us loud in the world of the dead;
There is none that does his work not one;
A touch of their office might have sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

3

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for what?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

4

Nothing but idiot gabble!
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold;
Not let any man think for the public good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the house;
Everything came to be known.
Who told *him* we were there?

5

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to lie;
He has gather'd the bones for his o'er-grown whelp to
crack;
Crack them now for yourself. and howl. and die.

6

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
 And curse me the British vermin, the rat;
 I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,
 But I know that he lies and listens mute
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes:
 Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
 Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls!
 It is all used up for that.

7

Tell him now: she is standing here at my head;
 Not beautiful now, not even kind;
 He may take her now; for she never speaks her mind,
 But is ever the one thing silent here.
 She is not *of* us, as I divine;
 She comes from another stiller world of the dead,
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

8

But I know where a garden grows,
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,
 All made up of the lily and rose
 That blow by night, when the season is good,
 To the sound of dancing music and flutes:
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
 And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood;
 For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
 He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride;
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,
 Would he have that hole in his side?

9

But what will the old man say?
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy day;
 Yet now I could even weep to think of it;
 For what will the old man say
 When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

10

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;
But the red life spilt for a private blow—
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin.

11

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half-dead;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;
I will cry to the steps above my head
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

Part Three

VI

I

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing:
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—
'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

2

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,

Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

3

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,
 'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
 'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
 That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'
 And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
 With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
 Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

4

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold;
 And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
 And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;
 And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire;
 For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
 And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
 The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

5

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
 It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

National and Political Poems

TO THE QUEEN¹

Revered, beloved—O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria,—since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base;

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say,
'She wrought her people lasting good;

'Her court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence' closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen;

'And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet

1851

¹This was Tennyson's first publication, as Poet Laureate. He issued it as a Preface to the seventh edition of his volumes of 1842. The second stanza refers to the preceding Laureate, William Wordsworth.

'By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'

March, 1851

The two following poems were written soon after the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 and express Tennyson's satisfaction that so revolutionary a measure had been made law by Constitutional means and without resort to violence.

I

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent:

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

2

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet:
Above her shook the starry lights:
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stopt she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,¹
And, King-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

1842

FREEDOM²

I

O thou so fair in summers gone,
While yet thy fresh and virgin soul
Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,
The glittering Capitol;

¹The god Jupiter was described as holding in his hand a triple bolt of lightning.

²Written in 1884, just after Tennyson had been made a peer, as though to make clear the spirit in which he intended to exercise his rights in the House of Lords.

2

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,
But scarce of such majestic mien
As here with forehead vapour-swathed
In meadows ever green;

3

For thou—when Athens reign'd and Rome,
Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with pain
To mark in many a freeman's home
The slave, the scourge, the chain;

4

O follower of the Vision, still
In motion to the distant gleam,
Howe'er blind force and brainless will
May jar thy golden dream

5

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,
Of civic Hate no more to be,
Of Love to leaven all the mass,
Till every Soul be free;

6

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar
By changes all too fierce and fast
This order of Her Human Star,
This heritage of the past;

7

O scorner of the party cry
That wanders from the public good,
Thou—when the nations rear on high
Their idol smear'd with blood,

8

And when they roll their idol down—
Of saner worship sanely proud;
Thou loather of the lawless crown
As of the lawless crowd;

9

How long thine ever-growing mind
Hath still'd the blast and strown the wave,
Tho' some of late would raise a wind
To sing thee to thy grave,

10

Men loud against all forms of power—
 Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous tongues—
 Expecting all things in an hour—
 Brass mouths and iron lungs!

1885

ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O thou, that sendest out the man
 To rule by land and sea,
 Strong mother of a Lion-line,
 Be proud of those strong sons of thine
 Who wrench'd their rights from thee!

What wonder, if in noble heat
 Those men thine arms withstood,
 Retought the lesson thou hadst taught,
 And in thy spirit with thee fought—
 Who sprang from English blood!

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,
 Lift up thy rocky face,
 And shatter, when the storms are black,
 In many a streaming torrent back,
 The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law
 The growing world assume,
 Thy work is thine—The single note
 From that deep chord which Hampden smote
 Will vibrate to the doom.

1874 (written many years earlier):

POLAND¹

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,
 And trampled under by the last and least
 Of men? The heart of Poland hath not ceased
 'To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth drown
 The fields, and out of every smouldering town
 Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,
 Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East
 Transgress his ample bound to some new crown:—

¹Addressed to the Poles during their revolt against the Czar Nicholas 1st.

Cries to Thee, 'Lord, how long shall these things be?
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region?' Us, O Just and Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in three;
Us, who stand now, when we should aid the right—
A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

1830

MONTENEGRO¹

They rose to where their sovran eagle sails,
They kept their faith, their freedom, on the height,
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and night
Against the Turk; whose inroad nowhere scales
Their headlong passes, but his footstep fails,
And red with blood the Crescent reels from fight
Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone flight
By thousands down the crags and thro' the vales.
O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne
Of Freedom! warriors beating back the swarm
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
Great Tsernogora! never since thine own
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.

1877

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY,² 1852

My Lords, we heard you speak: you told us all
That England's honest censure went too far;
That our free press should cease to brawl,
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into war.
It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing, into words.

¹This poem was written during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 which resulted in the freeing of this territory from Turkish Control. *Tsernogora* is the slavonic name for Montenegro.

²One of a series of poems published under pseudonyms at a time when Britain was on bad terms with Napoleon III and many people anticipated a French invasion. The lines were written when the House of Lords threw out the Militia Bill which Tennyson considered essential for National defence. He did not publish them under his own name, because he feared that an attack on the French by her Poet Laureate might embarrass the Queen.

We love not this French God, the child of Hell,
 Wild War, who breaks the converse of the wise;
 But though we love kind Peace so well,
 We dare not ev'n by silence sanction lies.
 It might be safe our censures to withdraw;
 And yet, my Lords, not well: there is a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak free,
 Tho' all the storm of Europe on us break;
 No little German state are we,
 But the one voice in Europe: we *must* speak;
 That if to-night our greatness were struck dead,
 There might be left some record of the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.
 Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er.
 Better the waste Atlantic roll'd
 On her and us and ours for evermore.
 What! have we fought for Freedom from our prime,
 At last to dodge and palter with a public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never fear'd.
 From our first Charles by force we wrung our claims.
 Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
 We flung the burthen of the second James.
 I say, we *never* feared! and as for these,
 We broke them on the land, we drove them on the seas.

And you my Lords, you make the people muse
 In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed—
 Were those your sires who fought at Lewes?¹
 Is this the manly strain of Runnymede?
 O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,
 Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here were sin,
 Not ours the fault if we have feeble hosts—
 If easy patrons of their kin
 Have left the last free race with naked coasts!

¹Pronounced like 'lose'—the old pronunciation of the name.

They knew the precious things they had to guard:
For us, we will not spare the tyrant one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester may bawl,
What England was, shall her true sons forget?
We are not cotton-spinners all,
But some love England and her honour yet.
And these in our Thermopylae shall stand,
And hold against the world this honour of the land.

1852

HANDS ALL ROUND ¹

First drink a health, this solemn night,
A health to England, every guest;
That man's the best cosmopolite,
Who loves his native country best.
May Freedom's oak for ever live
With stronger life from day to day;
That man's the true Conservative
Who lops the moulder'd branch away.
Hands all round!
God the tyrant's hope confound!
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends,
And the great name of England round and round.

A health to Europe's honest men!
Heaven guard them from her tyrants' jails!
From wrong'd Poerio's noisome den,
From iron'd limbs and tortured nails
We curse the crimes of southern kings,
The Russian whips and Austrian rods,
We, likewise, have our evil things;
Too much we make our Ledgers Gods,

¹Another of the series referred to in the last preceding note. *Carlo Poerio* mentioned in the second stanza, was imprisoned by Ferdinand King of Naples in conditions of great brutality. Gladstone managed to visit him in prison and his exposure of Ferdinand's methods helped to arouse British feeling in favour of a free and united Italy.

The last two stanzas calling on America to stand by Britain in the event of a European War, have a prophetic interest. The poem was revised and published by Tennyson in a less vigorous form in 1882. See collected Edition (one volume) page 575.

Yet hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To Europe's better health we drink, my friends,
And the great name of England round and round.

What health to France, if France be she,
Whom martial prowess only charms?
Yet tell her—Better to be free
Than vanquish all the world in arms.
Her frantic city's flashing heats
But fire to blast the hopes of men.
Why change the titles of your streets?
You fools, you'll want them all again.
Yet hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To France, the wiser France, we drink, my friends,
And the great name of England round and round.

Gigantic daughter of the West,
We drink to thee across the flood,
We know thee most, we love thee best
For art thou not of British blood?
Should war's mad blast again be blown,
Permit not thou the tyrant powers
To fight thy mother here alone,
But let thy broadsides roar with ours.
Hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To our great kinsmen of the West, my friends,
And the great name of England round and round.

O rise, our Atlantic sons,
When war against our freedom springs!
O speak to Europe thro' your guns!
They *can* be understood by kings.
You must not mix our Queen with those
That wish to keep their people fools;
Our freedom's foemen are her foes,
She comprehends the race she rules.
Hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To our great kinsmen of the West, my friends,
And the great cause of Freedom round and round.

Feb. 7, 1852

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON¹

I

Bury the Great Duke
 With an empire's lamentation,
 Let us bury the Great Duke
 'To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
 Mourning when their leaders fall,
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

2

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
 Here, in streaming London's central roar.
 Let the sound of those he wrought for,
 And the feet of those he fought for,
 Echo round his bones for evermore.

3

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
 As fits an universal woe,
 Let the long long procession go,
 And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
 And let the mournful martial music blow;
 The last great Englishman is low.

4

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
 Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
 No more in soldier fashion will he greet
 With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
 The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
 Whole in himself, a common good.

¹See Introduction, page 35. This poem was described by the author of the *Life of the Great Duke* in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as the finest tribute to him and the best picture of him. In order to appreciate it fully, it should be read (or chanted) aloud with strong emphasis on the rhythm. The Duke was buried in the crypt of St. Paul's near to Lord Nelson. (See Section 6.)

Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,
 Great in council and great in war,
 Foremost captain of his time,
 Rich in saving common-sense,
 And, as the greatest only are,
 In his simplicity sublime.
 O good gray head which all men knew,
 O voice from which their omens all men drew,
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,
 O fall'n at length that tower of strength
 Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
 Such was he whom we deplore.
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
 The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

5

All is over and done:
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 England, for thy son.
 Let the bell be toll'd.
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 And render him to the mould.
 Under the cross of gold
 That shines over city and river,
 There he shall rest for ever
 Among the wise and the bold.
 Let the bell be toll'd:
 And a reverent people behold
 The towering car, the sable steeds:
 Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
 Dark in its funeral fold.
 Let the bell be toll'd:
 And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
 And the sound of the sorrowing anther roll'd
 Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
 And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
 He knew their voices of old.
 For many a time in many a clime
 His captain's-ear has heard them boom
 Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
 When he with those deep voices wrought,
 Guarding realms and kings from shame;
 With those deep voices our dead captain taught
 The tyrant, and asserts his claim
 In that dread sound to the great name,

Which he has worn so pure of blame,
 In praise and in dispraise the same,
 A man of well-attemper'd frame.
 O civic muse, to such a name,
 To such a name for ages long,
 To such a name,
 Preserve a broad approach of fame,
 And ever-echoing avenues of song.

6

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,
 With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
 With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?
 Mighty Seaman, this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea.
 Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
 The greatest sailor since our world began.
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
 To thee the greatest soldier comes;
 For this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea;
 His foes were thine; he kept us free;
 O give him welcome, this is he
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
 And worthy to be laid by thee;
 For this is England's greatest son,
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,
 Nor ever lost an English gun;
 This is he that far away
 Against the myriads of Assaye
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
 And underneath another sun,
 Warring on a later day,
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew
 The treble works, the vast designs
 Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
 Where he greatly stood at bay.
 Whence he issued forth anew,
 And ever great and greater grew,
 Beating from the wasted vines
 Back to France her banded swarms,
 Back to France with countless blows,
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
 Follow'd up in valley and glen
 With blare of bugle, clamour of men,

Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
 And England pouring on her foes.
 Such a war had such a close.
 Again their ravening eagle rose
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
 And barking for the thrones of kings;
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
 On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down;
 A day of onsets of despair!
 Dash'd on every rocky square
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
 Thro' the long-tormented air
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
 And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
 So great a soldier taught us there,
 What long-enduring hearts could do
 In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
 And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
 If aught of things that here befall
 Touch a spirit among things divine,
 If love of country move thee there at all,
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
 And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
 In full acclaim,
 A people's voice,
 The proof and echo of all human fame,
 A people's voice, when they rejoice
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 Attest their great commander's claim
 With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
 Eternal honour to his name.

7

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
 Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers;
 Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
 His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
 We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
 Of boundless love and reverence and regret
 To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.

And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
 Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
 And save the one true seed of freedom sown
 Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
 That sober freedom out of which there springs
 Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
 For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
 And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
 Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
 Remember him who led your hosts;
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
 His voice is silent in your council-hall
 For ever; and whatever tempests lour
 For ever silent; even if they broke
 In thunder, silent; yet remember all
 He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
 Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
 Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
 Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
 Whose life was work, whose language rife
 With rugged maxims hewn from life;
 Who never spoke against a foe;
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
 All great self-seekers trampling on the right:
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
 Truth-lover was our English Duke;
 Whatever record leap to light
 He never shall be shamed.

8

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
 He, on whom from both her open hands
 Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
 Yea, let all good things await
 Him who cares not to be great,
 But as he saves or serves the state.
 Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
 The path of duty was the way to glory:

He that walks it, only thirsting
 For the right, and learns to deaden
 Love of self, before his journey closes,
 He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
 Into glossy purples, which outredden
 All voluptuous garden-roses.
 Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
 The path of duty was the way to glory:
 He, that ever following her commands,
 On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
 Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
 His path upward, and prevail'd,
 Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
 Are close upon the shining table-lands
 To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
 Such was he: his work is done.
 But while the races of mankind endure,
 Let his great example stand
 Colossal, seen of every land,
 And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure:
 Till in all lands and thro' all human story
 The path of duty be the way to glory:
 And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
 For many and many an age proclaim
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 And when the long-illumined cities flame,
 Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
 With honour, honour, honour, honour to him.
 Eternal honour to his name.

9

Peace, his triumph will be sung
 By some yet unmoulded tongue
 Far on in summers that we shall not see:
 Peace, it is a day of pain
 For one about whose patriarchal knee
 Late the little children clung:
 O peace, it is a day of pain
 For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
 Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
 Ours the pain, be his the gain!
 More than is of man's degree
 Must be with us, watching here
 At this, our great solemnity.
 Whom we see not we revere;
 We revere, and we refrain
 From talk of battles loud and vain,

And brawling memories all too free
 For such a wise humility
 As befits a solemn fane:
 We revere, and while we hear
 The tides of Music's golden sea
 Setting toward eternity,
 Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
 Until we doubt not that for one so true
 There must be other nobler work to do
 Than when he fought at Waterloo,
 And Victor he must ever be.
 For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
 And break the shore, and evermore
 Make and break, and work their will;
 Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
 Round us, each with different powers,
 And other forms of life than ours,
 What know we greater than the soul?
 On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
 Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
 The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
 The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
 He is gone who seem'd so great.—
 Gone; but nothing can bereave him
 Of the force he made his own
 Being here, and we believe him
 Something far advanced in State,
 And that he wears a truer crown
 Than any wreath that man can weave him.
 Speak no more of his renown,
 Lay your earthly fancies down,
 And in the vast cathedral leave him,
 God accept him, Christ receive him.

1852

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE¹

I

Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

¹Lord Cardigan, misunderstanding an order, led the Light Brigade of 607 men $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to attack a line of Russian batteries, with Russian batteries firing at them from either side. The poem was based on the words "some one had blundered" which Tennyson read in *The Times* article describing the charge. (See Introduction, page 36.)

'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

2

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

3

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

4

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

5

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;

Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

6

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

1854

PROLOGUE TO GENERAL HAMLEY¹

Our birches yellowing and from each
The light leaf falling fast,
While squirrels from our fiery beech
Were bearing off the mast,
You came, and look'd and loved the view
Long-known and loved by me,
Green Sussex fading into blue
With one gray glimpse of sea;
And, gazing from this height alone,
We spoke of what had been
Most marvellous in the wars your own
Crimean eyes had seen;
And now—like old-world inns that take
Some warrior for a sign
That therewithin a guest may make
True cheer with honest wine—
Because you heard the lines I read
Nor utter'd word of blame,
I dare without your leave to head
These rhymings with your name,
Who know you but as one of those
I fain would meet again,
Yet know you, as your England knows
That you and all your men

¹A distinguished soldier who fought in the Crimean War and the Egyptian Campaign of 1882 and was the author of a classic work on *The Operations of War* and other books. He had visited Tennyson in his Sussex home in November 1883.

Were soldiers to her heart's desire
 When, in the vanish'd year,
 You saw the league-long rampart-fire
 Flare from Tel-el-Kebir
 Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,
 And Wolseley overthrew
 Arâbi, and the stars in heaven
 Paled, and the glory grew.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA¹

OCTOBER 25, 1854

I

The charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!
 Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,
 Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley—and stay'd;
 For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding by
 When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky;
 And he call'd 'Left wheel into line!' and they wheel'd and obey'd.
 Then he look'd at the host that had halted he knew not why,
 And he turn'd half round, and he bad his trumpeter sound
 To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he waved his blade
 To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never die—
 'Follow,' and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
 Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

2

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might of the fight!
 Thousands of horsemen had gather'd there on the height,
 With a wing push'd out to the left and a wing to the right,
 And who shall escape if they close? but he dash'd up alone
 Thro' the great gray slope of men,
 Sway'd his sabre, and held his own
 Like an Englishman there and then;

¹Sir James Scarlett, with 300 cavalry, was riding in marching order down a valley when suddenly 3000 Russian horsemen appeared over the hills on his left. He instantly made his men "left wheel into line" and then gave the order to charge, riding on well ahead himself and closely followed by his aide-de-camp, Elliot, a trumpeter and Shogog, the orderly. They crashed into the Russian line, in that order, the main body of the 300 coming last. Then, while they were struggling against odds of 10 to 1 the remainder of the Brigade came up and drove off the enemy. The 'three hundred' of the 'Heavy Brigade' who made this famous charge were Scots Greys and the 2nd Squadron of Inniskillens.

All in a moment follow'd with force
 'Three that were next in their fiery course,
 Wedged themselves in between horse and horse,
 Fought for their lives in the narrow gap they had made—
 Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up the hill,
 Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade.

3

Fell like a cannonshot,
 Burst like a thunderbolt,
 Crash'd like a hurricane,
 Broke thro' the mass from below,
 Drove thro' the midst of the foe,
 Plunged up and down, to and fro,
 Rode flashing blow upon blow,
 Brave Inniskillens and Greys
 Whirling their sabres in circles of light!
 And some of us, all in amaze,
 Who were held for a while from the fight,
 And were only standing at gaze,
 When the dark-muffled Russian crowd
 Folded its wings from the left and the right,
 And roll'd them around like a cloud,—
 O mad for the charge and the battle were we,
 When our own good redcoats sank from sight,
 Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,
 And we turn'd to each other, whispering, all dismay'd,
 'Lost are the gallant three hundred of Scarlett's Brigade!'

4

'Lost one and all' were the words
 Mutter'd in our dismay;
 But they rode like Victors and Lords
 Thro' the forest of lances and swords
 In the heart of the Russian hordes,
 They rode, or they stood at bay—
 Struck with the sword-hand and slew,
 Down with the bridle-hand drew
 The foe from the saddle and threw
 Underfoot there in the fray—
 Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock
 In the wave of a stormy day;
 Till suddenly shock upon shock
 Stagger'd the mass from without,
 Drove it in wild disarray,
 For our men gallopt up with a cheer and a shout,

And the foeman surged, and waver'd, and reel'd
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out of the field,
And over the brow and away.

5

Glory to each and to all, and the charge that they made!
Glory to all the three hundred, and all the Brigadel

EPILOGUE¹

IRENE

Not this way will you set your name
A star among the stars.

POET

What way?

IRENE

You praise when you should blame
The barbarism of wars.
A juster epoch has begun.

POET

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,
And that bright hair the modern sun,
Those eyes the blue to-day,
You wrong me, passionate little friend.
I would that wars should cease,
I would the globe from end to end
Might sow and reap in peace,
And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,
Or Trade re-frain the Powers
From war with kindly links of gold,
Or Love with wreaths of flowers.
Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all
My friends and brother souls,
With all the peoples, great and small,
That wheel between the poles.
But since, our mortal shadow, Ill
To waste this earth began—
Perchance from some abuse of Will
In worlds before the man

¹This poem was founded on a talk with Miss Laura Tennant, afterwards the wife of the Rt. Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, all-England cricketer and tennis champion.

Involving ours—he needs must fight
 To make true peace his own,
 He needs must combat might with might,
 Or Might would rule alone;
 And who loves War for War's own sake
 Is fool, or crazed, or worse;
 But let the patriot-soldier take
 His meed of fame in verse;
 Nay—tho' that realm were in the wrong
 For which her warriors bleed,
 It still were right to crown with song
 The warrior's noble deed—
 A crown the Singer hopes may last,
 For so the deed endures;
 But Song will vanish in the Vast;
 And that large phrase of yours
 'A Star among the stars,' my dear,
 Is girlish talk at best;
 For dare we dally with the sphere
 As he did half in jest,
 Old Horace? 'I will strike' said he
 'The stars with head sublime,'
 But scarce could see, as now we see,
 The man in Space and Time,
 So drew perchance a happier lot
 Than ours, who rhyme to-day.
 The fires that arch this dusky dot—
 Yon myriad-worlded way—
 The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,
 World-isles in lonely skies,
 Whole heavens within themselves, amaze
 Our brief humanities;
 And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,
 Tho' carved in harder stone—
 The falling drop will make his name
 As mortal as my own.

IRENE

No!

POET

Let it live then—ay, till when?
 Earth passes, all is lost
 In what they prophesy, our wise men,
 Sun-flame or sunless frost,

And deed and song alike are swept
 Away, and all in vain
 As far as man can see, except
 The man himself remain;
 And tho', in this lean age forlorn,
 Too many a voice may cry
 That man can have no after-morn,
 Not yet of these am I.
 The man remains, and whatso'er
 He wrought of good or brave
 Will mould him thro' the cycle-year
 That dawns behind the grave.
 And here the singer for his Art
 Not all in vain may plead
 'The song that nerves a nation's heart,
 Is in itself a deed.'

THE REVENGE¹

A Ballad of the Fleet

1

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
 And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
 'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!
 Then swear Lord Thomas Howard: 'Fore God I am no
 coward;
 But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
 And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
 We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?'

2

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know you are no coward;
 You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
 But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
 I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord
 Howard,
 To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain.'

3

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
 Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
 But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
 Very carefully and slow,
 Men of Bideford in Devon,

¹A small ship of 500 tons, in which Drake sailed against the Armada. Three years later, under the command of Sir Richard Grenville, she fought single handed against 53 large Spanish ships off the Azores.

And we laid them on the ballast down below;
 For we brought them all aboard,
 And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
 To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

4

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
 And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
 With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
 'Shall we fight or shall we fly?
 Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
 For to fight is but to die!
 There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set.'
 And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all good English men.
 Let us hang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
 For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet.'

5

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
 The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
 With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
 For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
 And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

6

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and
 laugh'd,
 Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
 Running on and on, till delay'd
 By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
 And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
 Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

7

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
 Whence the thunderbolt will fall
 Long and loud,
 Four galleons drew away
 From the Spanish fleet that day,
 And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
 And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

8

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself and went
 Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
 And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to
 hand,

For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

9

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the
summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-
three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons
came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder
and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead
and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could
fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

10

For he said 'Fight on! fight on!'
'Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was
gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

11

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the
summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still
could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark
and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all
of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,

'We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!'

12

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but the seamen made reply:
'We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow.'
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

13

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
'I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!'
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

14

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
'Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and
their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd navy
of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags
'To be lost evermore in the main.

THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW¹

I

Banner of England, not for a season, O banner of Britain, hast thou

Floated in conquering battle or flap to the battle-cry!
Never with mightier glory than when we had rear'd thee on high
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly siege of Lucknow—
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever we raised thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

2

Frail were the works that defended the hold that we held with
our lives—

Women and children among us, God help them, our children
and wives!

Hold it we might—and for fifteen days or for twenty at most.

'Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die at his post!'

Voice of the dead whom we loved, our Lawrence² the best of the
brave;

Cold were his brows when we kiss'd him—we laid him that
night in his grave.

'Every man die at his post!' and there hail'd on our houses and
halls

Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their cannon-balls,
Death in our innermost chamber, and death at our slight
barricade,

Death while we stood with the musket, and death while we
stooped to the spade,

Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded, for often there
fell,

Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it, their shot and their
shell,

Death—for their spies were among us, their marksmen were
told of our best,

So that the brute bullet broke thro' the brain that could think
for the rest;

Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets would rain at
our feet—

Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that girdled us
round—

Death at the glimpse of a finger from over the breadth of a street,
Death from the heights of the mosque and the palace, and death
in the ground!

¹Lucknow was besieged during the Indian Mutiny for about five months from June 30th, 1857.

²Sir Henry Lawrence died of his wounds on July 4.

Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine! down, down! and creep thro'
the hole!
Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear him—the murderous
mole!
Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point of the pickaxe be thro'
Click with the pick, coming nearer and nearer again than
before—
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the dark pioneer is no more;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew!

3

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many times, and it chanced on
a day
Soon as the blast of that underground thunderclap echo'd away,
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like so many fiends in
their hell—
Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on volley, and yell upon yell—
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad enemy fell.
What have they done? where is it? Out yonder. Guard the Redan!
Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the Bailey-gate! storm, and
it ran
Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean on every side
Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily devour'd by the tide—
So many thousands that if they be bold enough, who shall
escape?
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall know we are soldiers and
men!
Ready! take aim at their leaders—their masses are gapp'd with
our grape—
Backward they reel like the wave, like the wave flinging forward
again,
Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful they could not
subdue;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

4

Handful of men as 'we were, we were English in heart and in
limb,
Strong with the strength of the race to command, to obey, to
endure,
Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison hung but on him;
Still—could we watch at all points? we were every day fewer and
fewer.
There was a whisper among us, but only a whisper that past:
'Children and wives—if the tigers leap into the fold unawares—
Every man die at his post—and the foe may outlive us at last—
Better to fall by the hands that they love, than to fall into theirs!'

Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by the enemy sprung
 Clove into perilous chasms our walls and our poor palisades.
 Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure that your hand be as
 true!
 Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed are your flank fusillades—
 Twice do we hurl them to earth from the ladders to which they
 had clung,
 Twice from the ditch where they shelter we drive them with
 hand-grenades;
 And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

5

Then on another wild morning another wild earthquake out-tore:
 Clean from our lines of defence ten or twelve good paces or more.
 Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there from the light of the
 sun—
 One has leapt up on the breach, crying out: 'Follow me, follow
 me!'—
 Mark him—he falls! then another, and *him* too, and down
 goes he.
 Had they been bold enough then, who can tell but the traitors
 had won?
 Boardings and rafters and doors—an embrasure! make way for
 the gun!
 Now double-charge it with grape! It is charged and we fire,
 and they run.
 Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the dark face have his due!
 'Thanks to the kindly dark faces who fought with us, faithful
 and few,
 Fought with the bravest among us, and drove them, and smote
 them, and slew,
 That ever upon the topmost roof our banner in India blew.

6

Men will forget what we suffer and not what we do. We can fight!
 But to be soldier all day and be sentinel all thro' the night—
 Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their lying alarms,
 Bugles and drums in the darkness, and shoutings and soundings
 to arms,
 Ever the labour of fifty that had to be done by five,
 Ever the marvel among us that one should be left alive,
 Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loopholes around,
 Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid in the ground,
 Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract skies,
 Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,
 Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,
 Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not be heal'd,

Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife,—
 Torture and trouble in vain,—for it never could save us a life.
 Valour of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,
 Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,
 Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,
 Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief,
 Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew—
 Then day and night, day and night, coming down on the still-
 shatter'd walls
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls—
 But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

7

Hark cannonade, fusilade! is it true what was told by the scout,
 Outram and Havelock¹ breaking their way through the fell
 mutineers?

Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!
 All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,
 Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers,
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their
 tears!

Dance to the pibroch!—saved! we are saved!—is it you? is it
 you?

Saved by the valour of Havelock, saved by the blessing of
 Heaven!

'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have held it for eighty-seven!
 And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

1880

HAVELOCK,

NOVEMBER 25, 1857²

Bold Havelock march'd,
 Many a mile went he,
 Every mile a battle,
 Every battle a victory.

¹*Sir James Outram* and *Sir Henry Havelock* fought their way into the Residency on Sept. 26 but found they could only reinforce the beleaguered garrison which was ultimately relieved by *Sir Colin Campbell* at the end of November.

²These lines refer to the six actions which Havelock fought on his way out of Lucknow to meet *Colin Campbell's* relieving force. He died of dysentery four days after the commencement of the final withdrawal from the city.

**Bold Havelock died,
Tender and great and good,
And every man in Britain
Says 'I am of Havelock's blood!'**

first published 1897

MARCH 7, 1863

Sea-kings' daughter from over the sea,
 Alexandra!
 Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
 But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,
 Alexandral
 Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!
 Welcome her, thundering cheer of the street!
 Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,
 Scatter the blossom under her feet!
 Break, happy land, into earlier flowers!
 Make music, O bird, in the new-budded bowers!
 Blazon your mottoes of blessing and prayer!
 Welcome her, welcome her, all that is ours!
 Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!
 Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers!
 Flames, on the windy headland flare!
 Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!
 Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air!
 Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!
 Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and higher
 Melt into stars for the land's desire!
 Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,

469

1863

Written at the Request of the Prince of Wales

I

2

470

3

Britain fought her sons of yore—
 Britain fail'd; and never more,
 Careless of our growing kin,
 Shall we sin our fathers' sin,
 Men that in a narrower day—
 Unprophetic rulers they—
 Drove from out the mother's nest
 That young eagle of the West
 To forage for herself alone;
 Britons, hold your own!

4

Sharers of our glorious past,
 Brothers, must we part at last?
 Shall we not thro' good and ill
 Cleave to one another still?
 Britain's myriad voices call,
 'Sons, be welded each and all,
 Into one imperial whole,
 One with Britain, heart and soul!
 One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne!
 Britons, hold your own!

1886

DEDICATION¹

These to His Memory—since he held them dear,
 Perchance as finding there unconsciously
 Some image of himself—I dedicate,
 I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—
 These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me
 Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,
 'Who revered his conscience as his king;
 Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
 Who spoke no slander, no, nor listen'd to it;
 Who loved one only and who claved to her—'
 Her—over all whose realms to their last isle,
 Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,
 The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,
 Darkening the world. We have lost him: he is gone:

¹See Introduction, page 40, for the circumstances in which these dedicatory lines to the Prince Consort were written.

We know him now: all narrow jealousies
 Are silent; and we see him as he moved,
 How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,
 With what sublime suppression of himself,
 And in what limits, and how tenderly;
 Not swaying to this faction or to that;
 Not making his high place the lawless perch
 Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
 For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of years
 Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
 Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
 In that fierce light which beats upon a throne,
 And blackens every blot: for where is he,
 Who dares foreshadow for an only son
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his?
 Or how should England dreaming of *his* sons
 Hope more for these than some inheritance
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
 Laborious for her people and her poor—
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day—
 Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
 Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
 Beyond all titles, and a household name,
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;
 Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,
 Remembering all the beauty of that star
 Which shone so close beside Thee that ye made
 One light together, but has past and leaves
 The Crown a lonely splendour.

May all love,
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee,
 The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,
 The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,
 The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,
 Till God's love set Thee at his side again!

Poems of 1846-1869

THE NEW TIMON AND THE POETS¹

We knew him, out of Shakespeare's art,
And those fine curses which he spoke;
The old 'Timon, with his noble heart,
That, strongly loathing, greatly broke.

So died the Old: here comes the New:
Regard him: a familiar face:
I *thought* we knew him: What, it's you
The padded man—that wears the stays—

Who kill'd the girls and thrill'd the boys
With dandy pathos when you wrote,
A Lion, you, that made a noise,
And shook a mane *en papillotes*.

And once you tried the Muses too:
You fail'd, Sir: therefore now you turn,
You fall on those who are to you
As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long enduring hopes,
And careless what this hour may bring,
Can pardon little would-be Popes
And Brummels, when they try to sting.

An artist, Sir, should rest in art,
And waive a little of his claim;
To have the deep poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame.

But you, Sir, you are hard to please;
You never look but half content:
Nor like a gentleman at ease
With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spites and what with fears,
You cannot let a body be:
It's always ringing in your ears,
'They call this man as good as *me*.'

¹See Introduction, page 32.

What profits now to understand
 The merits of a spotless shirt—
 A dapper boot—a little hand—
 If half the little soul is dirt?

You talk of tinsel! why we see
 The old mark of rouge upon your cheeks.
You prate of nature! you are he
 That spilt his life about the cliques.

A Timon you! Nay, nay, for shame:
 It looks too arrogant a jest—
 The fierce old man—to take *his* name,
 You bandbox. Off, and let him rest.

1846

Lyrics from THE PRINCESS

The Princess tells the story of the Prince of a northern kingdom who has been betrothed in boyhood to the Princess of an allied kingdom to the South. The Princess becomes a fanatical feminist, forswears matrimony and refuses to fulfil her engagement. This leads to a fight between champions of the two kingdoms, in which her champions are successful and the Prince is wounded. She nurses him back to health, falls in love and marries him.

Some of these lyrics were included in the original poem, which was published in 1847, some were added in 1851. Those of 1847 are all blank verse lyrics, except the last which is a short idyll.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
 And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
 We fell out, my wife and I,
 O we fell out I know not why,
 And kiss'd again with tears.
 And blessings on the falling out
 That all the more endears,
 When we fall out with those we love
 And kiss again with tears!
 For when we came where lies the child
 We lost in other years,
 There 'above the little grave,
 O there above the little grave,
 We kiss'd again with tears.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!

Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

1851

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying;
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

1851

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

477

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'

1847

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,¹
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

'O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown;
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

¹The Prince's Love-song.

'O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

1847

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

1851

Home they brought her warrior dead;
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry;
All her maidens, watching, said,
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

1851

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n; the seed,'
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n; they came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears; they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand;
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n; they came,
The woodmen with their axes; lo the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n; they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain;
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power; and roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.'

1847

Ask me no more; the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more; what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye;
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

¹These stanzas are the Princess's song of triumph after the victory of her champions.

Ask me no more; thy fate and mine are seal'd;
 I strove against the stream and all in vain;
 Let the great river take me to the main;
 No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
 Ask me no more.

1851

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font;
 The fire-fly wakens; waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
 And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
 And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
 And slips into the bosom of the lake;
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
 Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

1847

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height;
 What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)
 In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?
 But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
 To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,,
 To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
 And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
 For Love is of the valley, come thou down
 And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
 Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
 Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
 Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
 With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
 Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
 Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
 That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls

To roll the torrent out of dusky doors;
 But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
 'To find him in the valley; let the wild
 Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
 The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
 Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
 That like a broken purpose waste in air;
 So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
 Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
 Arise to thee; the children call, and I
 Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
 Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
 Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
 And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

1847

MABLETHORPE ¹

Here often, when, a child, I lay reclined,
 I took delight in this fair strand and free;
 Here stood the infant Ilion of the mind,
 And here the Grecian ships all seemed to be.
 And here again I come, and only find
 The drain cut level of the marshy lea,
 Gray sand-banks, and pale sun-sets, dreary wind,
 Dim shores, dense rains, and heavy-clouded sea.

1850

THE EAGLE

Fragment

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,
 Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
 He watches from his mountain walls,
 And like a thunderbolt he falls.

1851

¹A village on the Lincolnshire coast where the Tennyson children used to go for holidays, before the family left Somersby.

REQUIESCAT

Fair is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly slowly glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die!
Her quiet dream of life this hour may cease.
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

1864

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ¹

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

1864

THE DAISY²

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O love, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine;
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road;
How like a gem, beneath, the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

¹This poem was written by Tennyson after walking through the Valley of Caunteretz, in the Pyrenees, through which he had walked with Arthur Hallam thirty-one years before. After writing it he found that he had miscalculated the time, but he could not alter thirty-two to thirty-one without spoiling the line, so, reluctantly, let the mistake stand.

²This poem, written by Tennyson when lying ill in Edinburgh in 1852, records a tour which he took with his wife in 1851.

How richly down the rocky dell
 The torrent vineyard streaming fell
 To meet the sun and sunny waters,
 That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
 By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;
 Where, here and there on sandy beaches
 A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus¹ seem'd to rove,
 Yet present in his natal grove,
 Now watching high on mountain cornice,
 And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
 Till, in a narrow street and dim,
 I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
 And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,
 Not the clipt palm of which they boast;
 But distant colour, happy hamlet,
 A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
 A light amid its olives green;
 Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
 Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
 Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
 And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
 Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
 Those niched shapes of noble mould,
 A princely people's awful princes,
 The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
 In those long galleries, were ours;
 What drives about the fresh Cascinè,
 Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

¹Columbus is supposed to have been born at or near Genoa.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and blast
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port² below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

¹See Virgil Georgics, bk. 2, line 159. *Larius* was the Latin name for Lake Como, which is still sometimes called "*Lario*". Hence the Como omnibus was called the Lariano—See next stanza.

²Varennia.

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
 A cypress in the moonlight shake,
 The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
 One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
 And up the snowy Splügen drew,
 But ere we reach'd the highest summit
 I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
 And now it tells of Italy.
 O love, we two shall go no longer
 To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life¹ your arms enfold
 Whose crying is a cry for gold:
 Yet here to-night in this dark city,
 When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
 This nurseling of another sky
 Still in the little book you lent me,
 And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
 The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
 The bitter east, the misty summer
 And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
 Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
 Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
 My fancy fled to the South again.

1855

TO W. C. MACREADY²

Farewell, Macready, since to-night we part;
 Full-handed thunders often have confessed
 Thy power, well-used to move the public breast.
 We thank thee with our voice, and from the heart.

¹Tennyson's eldest son, Hallam, was born in 1852.

²This poem was written for the great Shakespearean actor on his retirement from the stage in 1851 and read out by John Forster at the farewell dinner to him.

Farewell, Macready, since this night we part,
 Go, take thine honours home; rank with the best,
 Garrick and statelier Kemble, and the rest
 Who made a nation purer through their art.
 Thine is it that our drama did not die,
 Nor flicker down to brainless pantomime,
 And those gilt gauds men-children swarm to see.
 Farewell, Macready; moral, grave, sublime;
 Our Shakespeare's bland and universal eye
 Dwells pleased, through twice a hundred years, on thee.

*written in 1851
 published in 1885*

TO E.L. ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE¹

Illyrian woodlands, echoing falls
 Of water, sheets of summer glass,
 The long divine Peneïan pass,
 The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
 With such a pencil, such a pen,
 You shadow forth to distant men,
 I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
 And track'd you still on classic ground,
 I grew in gladness till I found
 My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
 And glisten'd—here and there alone
 The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown
 By fountain-urns;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
 Of cavern pillars; on the swell
 The silver lily heaved and fell;
 And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
 By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
 To him who sat upon the rocks,
 And fluted to the morning sea.

¹E.L. was Edward Lear, traveller, artist and nonsense poet.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE¹

Come, when no graver cares employ,
 Godfather, come and see your boy:
 Your presence will be sun in winter,
 Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
 Who give the Fiend himself his due,
 Should eighty-thousand college-councils
 Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
 At you, so careful of the right,
 Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome
 ('Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
 I watch the twilight falling brown
 All round a careless-order'd garden
 Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,
 But honest talk and wholesome wine,
 And only hear the magpie gossip
 Garrulous under a roof of pine:

For groves of pine on either hand,
 To break the blast of winter, stand ;
 And further on, the hoary Channel
 Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep
 Some ship of battle slowly creep,
 And on thro' zones of light and shadow
 Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
 Which made a selfish war begin ;
 Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;
 Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win:

¹Maurice had been compelled, at the end of 1853, to resign his Professorship of English Literature at King's College, London, because the Council of the College had passed a Resolution condemning his religious views as dangerous. He was Hallam Tennyson's godfather. The poem was written early in 1854 when England's participation in the Crimean War was imminent.

Or whether war's avenging rod
 Shall lash all Europe into blood;
 Till you should turn to dearer matters,
 Dear to the man that is dear to God;

How best to help the slender store,
 How mend the dwellings, of the poor;
 How gain in life, as life advances,
 Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come: the lawn as yet
 Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet;
 But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,
 Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
 For those are few we hold as dear;
 Nor pay but one, but come for many,
 Many and many a happy year.

1855

THE SAILOR BOY

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
 Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,
 And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,
 And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
 He heard a fierce mermaid cry,
 'O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,
 I see the place where thou wilt lie.'

'The sands and yeasty surges mix
 In caves about the dreary bay,
 And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
 And in thy heart the scrawl shall play.'

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure
 To those that stay and those that roam,
 But I will nevermore endure
 To sit with empty hands at home.'

'My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, "Stay for shame;"
My father raves of death and wreck,
They are all to blame, they are all to blame.

'God help me! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me.'

1861

THE VOYAGE¹

1

We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbour-mouth;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fled to the South:
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

2

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
And swept behind; so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seem'd to sail into the Sun!

3

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

¹*The Voyage* is an allegory of man's search for the ideal.

4

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view;
They climbed as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield;

5

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

6

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine;¹
By sands and steaming flats, and floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

7

O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark!
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the dark;
At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

8

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.

¹These lines describe a volcanic mountain in eruption.

TENNYSON'S POETICAL WORKS

Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmur'd, 'O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine.'

9

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

10

And only one among us—him
We pleas'd not—he was seldom pleas'd:
He saw not far: his eyes were dim:
But ours he swore were all diseased.
'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,
'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

11

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;
We lov'd the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn.
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and thro' the counter gale?

12

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led:
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead,
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before:
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore.

THE FLOWER¹

Once in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Thro' my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

1864

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

1867

¹In these lines Tennyson symbolizes his poetic career.

BOADICEA

Boadicea was the wife of Prasutagus, King of the Iceni, a British tribe occupying what is now the county of Norfolk. On his death in A.D. 61, the Romans annexed his dominions. When she resisted, she was seized and scourged and her daughters violated by the Roman soldiers. Soon afterwards, when a large part of the Roman armies was fighting in North Wales and Anglesey (Mona), Boadicea raised a revolt in the South-East. She burned the Roman municipalities of Verulam (near St. Albans) and Camulodunum (Colchester), and inflicted great loss on the Roman armies, but was ultimately defeated and committed suicide.

Tennyson described the metre of his poem as a far-off echo of the *Attis* of the Latin poet, Catullus. There has been considerable discussion as to the proper way to read it. My own view is that to get the best out of it one should accentuate the third syllable from the beginning, and the sixth or seventh syllable from the end of the line.

While about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries
Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,
Far in the East Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,
Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,
Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Cámulodúne,
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

'They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous
populaces,
Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me
supplicating?
Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be
supplicated?
Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!¹
Must their ever-ravenging eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering?
Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and blacken innumerable,
Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcass a skeleton,
Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the wilderness, wallow
in it,
Till the face of Bel² be brighten'd, Taranis³ be propitiated.
Lo their colony half-defended! lo their colony, Cámulodúne!
There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous
adversary.
There the hive of Roman liars worship an emperor-idiot.
Such is Rome, and this her deity: hear it, Spirit of Cássivëlaún!³

¹This line refers to four British Tribes.

²*Bel* and *Taranis* were gods of the ancient Britons.

³King of the Britons in 50-60 B.C.

'Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O
 Coritanian!
 Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catiuechlanian,
 Trinobant.
 These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,
 Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard ærially,
 Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy
 massacred,
 Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.
 Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses
 and men;
 Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the reflux estuary;
 Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering—
 'There was one who watch'd and told me—down their statue of
 Victory fell.
 Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony Càmulodùne,
 Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we care to be pitiful?
 Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we dandle it amorously?

'Hear Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
 While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,
 There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,
 Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses,
 "Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!
 Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy
 narrow thee,
 Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty
 one yet!
 Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be
 celebrated,
 Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,
 Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,
 Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-
 thunder of God."
 So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?
 So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

'Hear Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
 Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the lover of liberty,
 Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and
 humiliated,
 Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!
 See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!
 Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.

Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúne!
There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing
territory,

Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringleted Britoness—
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.
Shout Icenian, Caticuchlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,
Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane
whirl'd.

Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cúnobelfne!¹
There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,
Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.
There they dwelt and there they rioted; there—there—they
dwell no more.

Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the
statuary,

Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,
Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,
Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,
Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the
little one out,

Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my charger, trample them
under us.'

So the Queen Boādicéa, standing loftily charioted,
Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.
Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,
Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments
Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January.
Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the
precipices,

Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.
So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries
Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous
hand,

Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,
Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,
Then her pulses at the clamouring of her enemy fainted away.
Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.
Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.
Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,
Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, Cámulodúne.

1864

¹The British equivalent for Cymbeline, a British king at the time of the Roman occupation, whose capital was at Colchester.

A DEDICATION¹

Dear, near and true—no truer Time himself
 Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore
 Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
 Shoots to the fall—take this and pray that he
 Who wrote it, honouring your sweet faith in him,
 May trust himself; and after praise and scorn,
 As one who feels the immeasurable world,
 Attain the wise indifference of the wise;
 And after Autumn past—if left to pass
 His autumn into seeming-leafless days—
 Draw toward the long frost and longest night,
 Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the fruit
 Which in our winter woodland looks a flower.²

1864

ENOCH ARDEN

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;
 And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
 Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
 In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and higher
 A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
 And high in heaven behind it a gray down
 With Danish barrows; and a hazelwood,
 By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
 Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
 Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
 The prettiest little damsel in the port,
 And Philip Ray the miller's only son,
 And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
 Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
 Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
 Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
 Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn;
 And built their castles of dissolving sand
 To watch them overflow'd, or following up
 And flying the white breaker, daily left
 The little footprint daily wash'd away.

¹This poem was written to the Poet's wife.

²The Spindle Tree.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:
 In this the children play'd at keeping house.
 Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
 While Annie still was mistress; but at times
 Enoch would hold possession for a week:
 'This is my house and this my little wife.'
 'Mine too' said Philip 'turn and turn about:'
 When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-made
 Was master: then would Philip, his blue eyes
 All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
 Shriek out 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at this
 The little wife would weep for company,
 And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
 And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
 And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
 Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
 On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
 But Philip loved in silence; and the girl
 Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;
 But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,
 And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
 A purpose evermore before his eyes,
 To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
 To purchase his own boat, and make a home
 For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last
 A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
 A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
 For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
 Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
 On board a merchantman, and made himself
 Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
 From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas:
 And all men look'd upon him favourably:
 And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May
 He purchased his own boat, and made a home
 For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
 The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
 The younger people making holiday,
 With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
 Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd
 (His father lying sick and needing him)
 An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,
 Just where the prone edge of the wood began

To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
 Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
 His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face
 All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
 That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
 And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
 Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
 And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
 Crept down into the hollows of the wood;
 There, while the rest were loud in merrymaking,
 Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
 Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
 And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
 Seven happy years of health and competence,
 And mutual love and honourable toil;
 With children; first a daughter. In him woke,
 With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
 To save all earnings to the uttermost,
 And give his child a better bringing-up
 Than his had been, or hers; a wish renew'd,
 When two years after came a boy to be
 The rosy idol of her solitudes,
 While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
 Or often journeying landward; for in truth
 Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil
 In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
 Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,
 Not only to the market-cross were known,
 But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
 And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.
 Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
 Open'd a larger haven: thither used
 Enoch at times to go by land or sea;
 And once when there, and clambering on a mast
 In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell:
 A limb was broken when they lifted him;
 And while he lay recovering there, his wife
 Bore him another son, a sickly one:
 Another hand crept too across his trade
 Taking her bread and theirs: and on him fell,
 Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,

Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
 To see his children leading evermore
 Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
 And her, he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd
 'Save them from this, whatever comes to me.'
 And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
 Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
 Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
 Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
 And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?
 There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
 Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?
 And Enoch all at once assented to it,
 Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
 No graver than as when some little cloud
 Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
 And isles a light in the offing: yet the wife—
 When he was gone—the children—what to do?
 Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans;
 To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—
 How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!
 He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—
 And yet to sell her—then with what she brought
 Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade
 With all that seamen needed or their wives—
 So might she keep the house while he was gone.
 Should he not trade himself out yonder? go
 This voyage more than once? yea twice or thrice—
 As oft as needed—last, returning rich,
 Become the master of a larger craft,
 With fuller profits lead an easier life,
 Have all his pretty young ones educated,
 And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:
 Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
 Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.
 Forward she started with a happy cry,
 And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
 Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
 Appraised his weight and fondled fatherlike,
 But had no heart to break his purposes
 To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will:
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,¹
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful hand,—
The space was narrow,—having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes
Whatever came to him: and then he said
'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it.'
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle 'and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home again.
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.'

¹His boat.

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke 'O Enoch, you are wise;
And yet for all your wisdom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more.'

'Well then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here
(He named the day) get you a seaman's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears.'

But when the last of those last moments came,
'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.
And fear no more for me; or if you fear
Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His: He made it.'

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him Enoch said
'Wake him not; let him sleep; how should the child
Remember this?' and kiss'd him in his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept
'Thro' all his future; but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She when the day, that Enoch mention'd, came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;
She saw him not: and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail
 She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him;
 Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,
 Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
 But throve not in her trade, not being bred
 To barter, nor compensating the want
 By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
 Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
 And still foreboding 'what would Enoch say?'
 For more than once, in days of difficulty
 And pressure, had she sold her wares for less
 Than what she gave in buying what she sold:
 She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and thus,
 Expectant of that news which never came,
 Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
 And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew
 Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
 With all a mother's care: nevertheless,
 Whether her business often call'd her from it,
 Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
 Or means to pay the voice who best could tell
 What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,
 After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—
 Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
 The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,
 Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace
 (Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),
 Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
 'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her now,
 May be some little comfort;' therefore went,
 Past thro' the solitary room in front,
 Paused for a moment at an inner door,
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
 Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,
 Fresh from the burial of her little one,
 Cared not to look on any human face,
 But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.
 Then Philip standing up said falteringly
 'Annie, I came to ask a favour of you.'

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd reply
 'Favour from one so sad and so forlorn
 As I am!' half abash'd him; yet unask'd,
 His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
 He set himself beside her, saying to her:

'I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,
 Enoch, your husband: I have ever said
 You chose the best among us—a strong man:
 For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
 And wherefore did he go this weary way,
 And leave you lonely? not to see the world—
 For pleasure?—nay, but for the wherewithal
 To give his babes a better bringing-up
 Than his had been, or yours: that was his wish
 And if he come again, vexed will he be
 To find the precious morning hours were lost.
 And it would vex him even in his grave,
 If he could know his babes were running wild
 Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—
 Have we not known each other all our lives?
 I do beseech you by the love you bear
 Him and his children not to say me nay—
 For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
 Why then he shall repay me—if you will,
 Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
 Now let me put the boy and girl to school:
 This is the favour that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against the wall
 Answer'd 'I cannot look you in the face;
 I seem so foolish and so broken down.
 When you came in my sorrow broke me down;
 And now I think your kindness breaks me down;
 But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me:
 He will repay you: money can be repaid;
 Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd
 'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,
 She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
 And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
 Then calling down a blessing on his head

Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth¹ beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and every way,
Like one who does his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude
Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where: and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd
To go with others, nutting to the wood,
And Annie would go with them; then they begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him
'Come with us Father Philip' he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and they went.

¹A small grassy close or paddock.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her; and sighing, 'Let me rest' she said:
So Philip rested with her well-content;
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow: at last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak a word.
'Tired?' but her face had fall'n upon her hands;
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship was lost!
No more of that! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite?' And Annie said
'I thought not of it: but—I know not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
And it has been upon my mind so long,
That tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living; well then—let me speak:
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children: I do think
They love me as a father: I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own;
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years,
We might be still as happy as God grants

To any of his creatures. Think upon it:
 For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
 No burthen, save my care for you and yours;
 And we have known each other all our lives,
 And I have loved you longer than you know.'

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:
 'You have been as God's good angel in our house.
 God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
 Philip, with something happier than myself.
 Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
 As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?'
 'I am content' he answer'd 'to be loved
 A little after Enoch.' 'O' she cried,
 Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a while:
 If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
 Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:
 Surely I shall be wiser in a year:
 O wait a little!' Philip sadly said
 'Annie, as I have waited all my life
 I well may wait a little.' 'Nay' she cried
 'I am bound: you have my promise—in a year:
 Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?'
 And Philip answer'd 'I will bide my year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
 Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
 Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;
 Then fearing night and chill for Annie, rose
 And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.
 Up came the children laden with their spoil;
 Then all descended to the port, and there
 At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,
 Saying gently 'Annie, when I spoke to you,
 That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong,
 I am always bound to you, but you are free.'
 Then Annie weeping answer'd 'I am bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,
 While yet she went about her household ways,
 Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,
 That he had loved her longer than she knew,
 That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
 And there he stood once more before her face,
 Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?' she ask'd.
 'Yes, if the nuts' he said, 'be ripe again:
 Come out and see.' But she—she put him off—

So much to look to—such a change—a month—
 Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—
 A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes
 Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
 Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
 'Take your own time, Annie, take your own time.'
 And Annie could have wept for pity of him;
 And yet she held him on delayingly
 With many a scarce-believable excuse,
 Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,
 Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
 Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
 Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
 Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her;
 Some that she but held off to draw him on;
 And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,
 As simple folk that knew not their own minds,
 And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
 Like serpent eggs together, laughingly
 Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
 Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;
 But evermore the daughter prest upon her
 To wed the man so dear to all of them
 And lift the household out of poverty;
 And Philip's rosy face contracting grew
 Careworn and wan; and all these things fell on her
 Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
 That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
 Pray'd for a sign 'my Enoch is he gone?'
 Then compass'd round by the blind wall of night
 Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,
 Started from 'bed, and struck herself a light,
 Then desperately seized the holy Book,
 Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
 Suddenly put her finger on the text,
 'Under the palm-tree.' That was nothing to her:
 No meaning there: she closed the Book and slept:
 When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,
 Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:
 'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy, he is singing
 Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines
 The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms
 Whereof the happy people strowing cried

"Hosanna in the highest!" ' Here she woke,
 Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him
 'There is no reason why we should not wed.'
 'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd, 'both our sakes,
 So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,
 Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.
 But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
 A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,
 She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,
 She knew not what; nor loved she to be left
 Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
 What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd, often
 Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
 Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew:
 Such doubts and fears were common to her state,
 Being with child: but when her child was born,
 Then her new child was as herself renew'd,
 Then the new mother came about her heart,
 Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
 And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously sail'd
 The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at setting forth
 The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook
 And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvest
 She slipt across the summer of the world,
 Then after a long tumble about the Cape
 And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
 She passing thro' the summer world again,
 The breath of heaven came continually
 And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
 Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
 Quaint monsters for the market of those times,
 A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed
 Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
 Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
 Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows:
 Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
 Then baffling, a long course of them; and last
 Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens
 Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers' came

The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
 But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
 Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
 These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
 Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
 Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots;
 Nor save for pity was it hard to take
 The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
 There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
 They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,
 Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
 Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
 Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,
 Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
 Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-life.
 They could not leave him. After he was gone,
 The two remaining found a fallen stem;
 And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
 Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
 Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
 In those two deaths he read God's warning 'wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
 And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
 The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
 The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
 The lustre of the long convolvuluses
 That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
 Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
 And glories of the broad belt of the world,
 All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
 He could not see, the kindly human face,
 Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
 The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
 The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
 The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
 And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
 Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
 As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
 Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
 A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:
 No sail from day to day, but every day
 The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts

Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things and places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the line;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart
Spoken with That, which being everywhere
Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,
Like the Good Fortune, from her destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay:
For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores
With clemour. Downward from his mountain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,
 Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,
 Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it seem'd,
 With inarticulate rage, and making signs
 They knew not what: and yet he led the way
 To where the rivulets of sweet water ran;
 And ever as he mingled with the crew,
 And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue
 Was loosen'd, till he made them understand;
 Whom, when their casks were fill'd they took aboard:
 And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
 Scarce-credited at first but more and more,
 Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it:
 And clothes they gave him and free passage home;
 But oft he work'd among the rest and shook
 His isolation from him. None of these
 Came from his country, or could answer him,
 If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.
 And dull the voyage was with long delays,
 The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but evermore
 His fancy fled before the lazy wind
 Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
 He like a lover down thro' all his blood
 Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath
 Of England, blown across her ghostly wall:
 And that same morning officers and men
 Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
 Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it:
 Then moving up the coast they landed him,
 Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
 But homeward—home—what home? had he a home?
 His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,
 Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,
 Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
 Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray;
 Cut off the length of highway on before,
 And left but narrow breadth to left and right
 Of wither'd holt¹ or tilth or pasturage.
 On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
 Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
 The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down:
 Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;
 Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
 Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

¹Copse.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking 'dead or dead to me!'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone; but he was gone
Who kept it; and his widow Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child: and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion: any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller: only when she closed
'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost'
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
Repeated muttering 'cast away and lost;'
Again in deeper inward whispers 'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again;
'If I might look on her sweet face again
And know that she is happy.' So the thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below;
There did a thousand memories roll upon him,
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by

The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward; but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd:
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the hearth:
And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;
And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd;
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's love,—
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
 Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
 And feeling all along the garden-wall,
 Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,
 Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,
 As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
 Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees
 Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
 His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

'Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?
 O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou
 That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
 Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
 A little longer! aid me, give me strength
 Not to tell her, never to let her know.
 Help me not to break in upon her peace.
 My children too! must I not speak to these?
 They know me not. I should betray myself.
 Never: No father's kiss for me—the girl
 So like her mother, and the boy, my son.'

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little,
 And he lay tranced; but when he rose and paced
 Back toward his solitary home again,
 All down the long and narrow street he went
 Beating it in upon his weary brain,
 As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
 'Not to tell her, never to let her know.'

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
 Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
 Prayer from a living source within the will,
 And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
 Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
 Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's wife'
 He said to Miriam 'that you spoke about,
 Has she no fear that her first husband lives?'
 'Ay, ay, poor soul' said Miriam, 'fear enow!
 If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
 Why, that would be her comfort;' and he thought
 'After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,
 I wait His time,' and Enoch set himself,
 Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
 Almost to all things could he turn his hand.

Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
 To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
 At lading and unlading the tall barks,
 That brought the stinted commerce of those days;
 Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:
 Yet since he did but labour for himself,
 Work without hope, there was not life in it
 Whereby the man could live; and as the year
 Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
 When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
 Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
 Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
 But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
 And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
 For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
 See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
 The boat that bears the hope of life approach
 To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
 Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
 On Enoch thinking 'after I am gone,
 Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last.'
 He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said
 'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
 Before I tell you—swear upon the book
 Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'
 'Dead,' clamour'd the good woman, 'hear him talk!
 I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round.'
 'Swear' added Enoch sternly 'on the book.'
 And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
 Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,
 'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'
 'Know him?' she said 'I knew him far away.
 Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
 Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'
 Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her;
 'His head is low, and no man cares for him.
 I think I have not three days more to live;
 I am the man.' At which the woman gave
 A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.
 'You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot
 Higher than you be.' Enoch said again
 'My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
 My grief and solitude have broken me;
 Nevertheless, know you that I am he
 Who married—but that name has twice been changed—

I married her who married Philip Ray.
 Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,
 His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
 His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
 And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
 Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
 While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
 To rush abroad all round the little haven,
 Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;
 But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,
 Saying only 'See your bairns before you go!
 Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and arose
 Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
 A moment on her words, but then replied:

'Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
 But let me hold my purpose till I die.
 Sit down again; mark me and understand,
 While I have power to speak. I charge you now,
 When you shall see her, tell her that I died
 Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
 Save for the bar between us, loving her
 As when she laid her head beside my own.
 And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
 So like her mother, that my latest breath
 Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.
 And tell my son that I died blessing him.
 And say to Philip that I blest him too;
 He never meant us any thing but good.
 But if my children care to see me dead,
 Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
 I am their father; but she must not come,
 For my dead face would vex her after-life.
 And now there is but one of all my blood
 Who will embrace me in the world-to-be:
 This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it,
 And I have borne it with me all these years.
 And thought to bear it with me to my grave;
 But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
 My babe in bliss: wherefore when I am gone,
 Take, give her this, for it may comfort her:
 It will moreover be a token to her,
 That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
 Made such a voluble answer promising all,
 That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her

Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
There came so loud a calling of the sea,¹
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad
Crying with a loud voice 'A sail! a sail!
I am saved;' and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.²

¹This phrase does not imply a storm, but the ringing sound of a strong ground-swell.

²One of the most adversely criticized lines in Tennyson's works. I think he would have defended it as true to nature, for he knew that amongst working people the amount spent on a funeral was generally regarded as an indication of the respect in which the dead was held. He himself hated funeral display. (See *Memoir*, single volume edition, page 431.)

Lincolnshire Poems

These poems are written in the dialect which was spoken about Somersby in Lincolnshire when the poet was a boy. He took great pains to represent the dialect accurately and changed his method in at least one respect after the publication of the first poem. In that he represented the long "i" and "y" sounds as "oi" and "oy". Afterwards he dropped this, and before one of the later poems he inserted a note, saying that these sounds were best represented by the vowels "ai" pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction. But he never altered the spelling of the first poem, *The Northern Farmer—Old Style* and, in order to make the series uniform in spelling, I have ventured to do this.

To realize to the full the sardonic humour and brilliant characterization of these poems they should be read aloud in a spirit of broad comedy. Imagine them, for example, being read, as I have been privileged to hear some of them, by Mr. Stanley Holloway.

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE¹

1

Wheer 'asta beän saw long and me liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thoust nowt o' a noorse: why, Doctor's abeän an'
agoän:
Says that I moänt 'ev naw moor aäle: but I beänt a fool:
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to breäk my rule.

2

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur 'e says what's nawways true:
Naw soort o' kind o' use to saäy things that 'e do.
I've 'ed my pint o' aäle ivry night sin' I beän 'ere.
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-night for foorty year.

3

Parson's a beän likewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.
'The amighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' 'e said,
An' 'e towd me my sins, an's tithe were due, an' I gied it in hand;
I done my duty by 'im, as I 'a done by the land.

4

Larn'd 'e ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
But 'e cast oop, thot 'e did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.²
Thaw 'e knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squire an' choorch an' staäte,
An' i' the woost o' times I wur niver agin the raäte.

5

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor my Sally wur deäð,
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy like a buzzard-clock³ ower my
'eäð,
An' I niver knaw'd whot 'e meän'd but I thowt 'e 'ad summut to
saäy,
An' I thowt 'e said whot 'e owt to 'a said an' I ' coom'd awaäy.

6

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
Mowt 'a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understand;
I done my duty by 'um as I 'a done by the land.

¹The old farmer is dying and scolding his nurse for refusing to bring him his night-cap of ale.

²Bairn.

³Cockchafer.

7

But Parson 'e cooms an' 'e goäs, an' 'e says it eäsy an' free
 'The amighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' says 'e.
 I weänt saäy men be liars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste:
 But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby
 waäste.

8

D'ya mind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born
 then;
 'Theer wur a boggle¹ in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen;
 Moäst like a butter-bump,² fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um
 out.³

9

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
 Down i' the wild 'enemies⁴ afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.
 Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner⁵ 'ed shot 'um as dcäd as a naäil.
 Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'size—but git me my aäle.

10

Dubbut looök at the waäste: theer warn't not feeäd for a cow;
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—
 Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäd,
 Fourscoor⁶ yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeäd.⁷

11

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
 Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
 If godamighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let me aloän,
 Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squire's, an' land o' my oän.

12

Do godamighty know what 'e's doing a-taäkin' o' me?
 I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a pea;
 An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!
 And I 'a managed for Squire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

¹Ghost.

²Bittern.

³Tore up and threw him out.

⁴Anemones.

⁵One or other.

⁶ou as in hour.

⁷Clover seed.

LINCOLNSHIRE POEMS

13

'E mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or 'e mowt 'a taäen young Robins—'e niver mended a fence:
But godamighty 'e moost taäke me an' taäke me now
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälm to plow!

14

Looök 'ow quality smiles when they seeäs me a passin' by,
Says to thessén naw doubt 'what a man 'e beä sewer-ly!'¹
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squire sin fust 'e coom'd to the
'All;
I done my duty by Squire an' I done my duty by hall.

15

Squire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'ev to write,
For whoä's to howd the land ater me thot muddles me quite;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot 'e weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor 'e moänt to Robins—'e niver rembles the stoäns.

16

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Divil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun die I mun die, thaw life they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun die I mun die, for I couldn abeär to see it.

17

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn' bring me the aäle?
Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an 'e's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, 'e knaws naw moor nor a fly;
Git ma my aäle I tell tha, an' if I mun die I mun die.

1864

NORTHERN FARMER

NEW STYLE

I

Dosn't tha 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, tha's an ass for thy paaäns:
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braaäns.

¹Surely.

2

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon's parson's
'ouse—

Dosn't tha know that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse?

Time to think on it then; for tha'll be twenty to weeäk.¹

Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

3

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;

Tha's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.

Tha'll not marry for munny—tha's sweet upo' parson's lass—

Noä—tha'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha
an ass.

4

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by—Saäint's-daäy—they was ringing
the bells.

She's a beauty tha thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,

Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the flower as
blaws.

But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

5

Do'ant be stunt:² taäke time: I knows what maäkes tha sa mad.

Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?

But I know'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd me this:

'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä whecr munny is!'

6

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther coom to 'and,

Wi' lots o' munny laaïd by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.

Maäybe she warn't a beauty:—I niver giv it a thowt—

But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

7

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,

Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle³ her breäd:

Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git hissen clear,

An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere.⁴

¹This week.

²Obstinate.

³Earn.

⁴Shire, County.

8

'An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shuvv,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd¹ yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e married fur
luvv.

9

Luvv? what's luvv? tha can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maakin' 'em goä together as they've good right to do.
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaïd by?
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reäson why.

10

Ay an' thy muther says tha wants to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass,
Woä then, propuppy, wiltha?²—an ass as near as mays nowt³—
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as owt.³

11

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'cäd, lad, out o' the fencel
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Propuppy, propuppy's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

12

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their rgular meäls.
Noä, but it's them as niver knows wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

13

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.
Feyther 'ad anmost nowt; leästways 'is munrly was 'id.
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an 'e died a good un, 'e did.

14

Looök tha theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill!
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

¹Or fow-welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back.

²Makes nothing.

³The flies are as fierce as anything.

15

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'im saäy-
Proputty, proputty, proputty—canter an' canter awaäy.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL

I

'Ouse-keeper sent tha my lass, fur New Squire coom'd last
night.

Butter an' heggs—yis—yis. I'll goä wi' tha back: all right;
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I warrants the heggs be as well,
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya breäks the shell.

2

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hev a glass o' cowslip wine!
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as thaw they was gells o' mine,
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire an' 'is darters an' me,
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver not took to she:
But Nelly, the last of the cletch,¹ I liked 'er the fust on 'em all,
Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es died o' the fever at fall:
An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord, but Miss Annie she said
it wur draäins,

Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an' arn'd naw thanks fur 'er
paäins.

Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my childer, I han't gotten none!
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and,² an' owd Squire's
gone.

3

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass: tha dosn' know what that be?
But I knows the law, I does, for the lawyer ha tow'd it me.
'When theer's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by the fault o' that ere
maäle³—

The gells they coun't fur nowt, and the next un he taäkes the
taäil.'

4

What be the next un like? can tha tell ony harm on 'im lass?—
Naay sit down—naw 'urry—sa cowl!—hev another glass!
Straänge an' cowl fur the time! we may happen a fall o' snaw—
Not es I 'cares fur to hear ony harm, but I likes to know.

¹A brood of chickens.

²The old woman's way of saying that the estate is "entailed".

³"By default of an heir male".

An' I 'oäps es 'e beänt booklarn'd: but 'e dosn' not coom fro' the
shere;
We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we haätes booklarnin' ere.

5

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an' niver lookt arter the
land—

Whoäts or tonups or taätes¹—'e 'ed hallus a booök i' 'is 'and,
Hallus aloän wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh upo' seventy year.
An' booöks, what's booöks? thou knaws thebbe naither 'ere nor
theer.

6

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taäils, an' the lawyer he tow'd it me
That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he couldn't cut down a tree!
'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I haätes 'em, my lass,
Fur we puts the muck o' the land an' they sucks the muck fro'
the grass.

7

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an' gied to the tramps goin' by—
An' all o' the wust i' the parish—wi' hoffens a drop in 'is eye.
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,
An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms, an' was 'untin' arter
the men,
An' hallus a-dallack² an' dizen'd out, an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,
While 'e sit like a greät glimmer-gowk³ wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is
noäse,
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff es it couldn't be scroob'd
awaäy,
Fur atween 'is reädin' an' writin' 'e snifft up a box in a daäy,
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor arter the birds wi' 'is gun,
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e leäved it tp Charlie 'is son,
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but Charlie 'e cotch'd the
pike,
For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e didn't take kind to it
like;
But I eärs 'e'd gie fur a howry⁴ owd book thutty pound an' moor,
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen, sa I knaw'd es 'e'd
coom to be poor;

¹Oats, turnips or potatoes.

²Overdrest in gay colours.

³Owl.

⁴Filthy.

An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow much—fur an owd
scratted stoän,
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an' 'e got a brown pot an'
a boän,
An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't goä, wi' good gowd o' the
Queen,
An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an' which was a shaame to
be seen;
But 'e niver loökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver not seed to owt,
An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks, an' booöks, as thou knaws,
beänt nowt.

8

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she lived she kep 'em all clear
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed none of 'er darters 'ere;
But arter she died we was all es one, the childer an' me,
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens we hed 'em to tea.
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud talk o' their Missis's
waäys,
An' the Missis's talk'd o' the lasses.—I'll tell tha some o' these
daäys.
Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop, like 'er mother afoor—
'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver darken'd my door.

9

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd gotten a fright at last,
An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's letters they foller'd sa
fast;
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e says to 'im, meek as a
mouse,
'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,¹
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oäps es thou'll 'elp me a bit,
An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I may saäve mysen yit.'

10

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im
'Noa.
I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an' be dang'd if I iver let goa!
Coom! coom! feyther, 'e says, 'why shouldn't thy booöks be
sowd?
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe worth their weight i' gowd.'

11

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd 'em, belong'd to the
Squire,
But the lasses 'ed teärd out læves i' the middle to kindle the fire;

¹ The workhouse

Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd nigh to nowt at the
saäle,
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git 'im to cut off 'is taäil.

12

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes—'e were that outdacious at
'oäm,
Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out Hell wi' a small-tooth
coämb—
Droonk wi' the Quality's wine, an' droonk wi' the farmer's
aäle,
Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e wouldn't cut off the taäil.

13

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and a thurn be a-grawin' theer,
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the Maäy es I see'd it to-year—
Theerabouts Charlie joompt—and it gied me a scare tother
night,
Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i' the derk, fur it looökt sa
white.
'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!—thaw the banks o' the beck be sa
high,
Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un,¹ thaw niver a hair wur
awry;
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an' Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,
Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur 'e lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

14

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur gone an' 'is boy wur deäð,
An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but 'e niver not lift oop 'is
'eäd:
Hallus a soft un Squire! an' 'e smiled, fur 'e hedn't naw friend,
Sa feyther an' son was buried tgether, an' this wur the hend.

15

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the mooney, büt hes the pride,
'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o' the tother side;
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, howsiver they praäy'd an'
praäy'd,
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves their debts to be paäid.
Siver² the mou'ds² rattled down upo' poor owd Squire i' the
wood,²
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they weänt niver coom to naw
good.

¹Bellerophon.

²However, earth, coffin.

16

Fur Molly the long un she walkt awaäy wi' a hofficer lad,
 An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin, sa o' coorse she be gone to the bad!
 An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet'arts she niver 'ed none—
 Straänge an' unheppen¹ Miss Lucy! we naämed her 'Dot an'
 gaw one!

An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'out ony harm i' the legs,
 An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'ead as bald as one o' them
 heggs,

An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as big i' the mouth as a cow,
 An' saw she mun hammergrate,² lass, or she weänt git a maäte
 onyhow!

An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me afoor my awn foäls to my
 fräce

'A lignorant village wife as 'ud hev to be larn'd her awn plaäce,'
 Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes now be a-grawin' sa owd,
 I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt not fit to be towd!

17

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd Miss Annie to saäy
 Es I should be talkin ageän 'em, es soon es they went awaäy,
 Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they went, an' our Nelly she gied
 me 'er 'and,

Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an' 'is gells es belong'd to
 the land;

Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther 'ere nor theer!

But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur huppuds o' twenty year.

18

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd, sa I hallus deal'd wi' the
 Hall,

An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they knaw'd what a hegg
 wur an' all;

Hugger-mugger they lived, but they wasn't that cäsy to pleäse,
 Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they laäid big heggs es tha
 seeäs;

An' I niver puts saäme³ i' my butter, they does it at Willis's
 farm,

Taäste another drop o' the wine—tweänt do tha naw harm.

19

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' is taäil in 'is 'and, an' owd Squire's
 gone;

I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my nightcap wur on;

¹Ungainly, awkward.

²Emigrate.

³Lard.

Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he coom'd last night sa
laäte—

Pluksh !!! the hens i' the peäs! why didn't tha hesp the gaäte?

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THE NORTHERN COBBLER

I

Waait till our Sally cooms in, fur thou mun a' sights to tell.

Eh, but I be maain glad to seeä tha sa 'arty an' well.

'Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a vartical soon!¹

Strange fur to goä fur to think what saailors a' seëan an' a' doon;

'Summat to drink—sa' 'ot?' I 'a nowt but Adam's wine:

What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to the 'eät o' the line?

2

'What's i' that bottle a-stanning theer?' I'll tell tha. Gin.

But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä fur it down to the inn.

Naay—fur I be maain-glad, but thaw tha was iver sa dry,

Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer, an' I'll tell tha why.

3

Meä an' thy sister was married, when wur it? back-end o' June,
Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well as a fiddle i' tune;

I could fettle and clump² owd booöts and shoes wi' the best on
'em all,

As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to Harmsby and Hutterby
Hall.

We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an' as 'appy as 'art could
think,

An' then the babby wur born, and then I taäkes to the drink.

4

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw I be hafe shaämed on it
now,

We could sing a good song at the Plow, we could sing a good
song at the Plow;

Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an' hurted my huck,³

An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes slaäpe down i' the squad
an' the muck:

¹The oo short, as in 'wood'.

²Mend and re-sole.

³Hip.

An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilor—not hafe ov a man, my lad—
 Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my faäce like a cat, an' it maäde
 'er sa mad
 That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,¹ an' raäted ma, 'Sottin'
 thy braäins
 Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an' hawmin'² about i' the
 laänes,
 Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn' not touch thy 'at to the Squire;³
 An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o'
 fire;
 But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus as droonk as a king,
 Foäłks' coostom flitted awaäy like a kite wi' a brokken string.

5

An' Sally she wesh'd foäłks' cloäths to keep the wolf fro' the
 door,
 Eh but the moor she riled me, she druv me to drink the moor,
 Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd, wheer Sally's owd stockin'
 wur 'id,
 An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and I weär'd³ it o' liquor,
 I did.

6

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull gotten loose at a faäir,
 An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin' and tcärin' 'er 'aäir,
 An' I tummled athurt the craädle an' sweär'd as I'd breäk ivry
 stick
 O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied our Sally a kick,
 An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs, an' she an' the babby
 beäl'd,⁴
 Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor a mortal beäst o' the
 feäld.

7

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd that our Sally went
 laämed
 'Cos o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur dreädful ashaämed;
 An' Sally wur sloomy⁵ an' draggle taäil'd in an owd turn gown,
 An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd an' the 'ole 'ouse hupside
 down.

¹Scold.

²Lounging.

³Spent.

⁴Bellowed, cried out.

⁵Sluggish, out of spirits.

8

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty an' neät an' sweeät,
 Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro' 'eäd to feeät:
 An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied 'er by Thursby thurn;
 T'heer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a Sunday at murn,
 Couldn't see 'im, we'eärd 'im a-mountin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,
 An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e shined like a sparkle o' fire.
 'Doesn't tha see 'im,' she axes, 'fur I can see 'im?' an' I
 Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as danced in 'er pratty blue
 eye;
 An' I says 'I mun gie tha a kiss,' an' Sally says 'Noä, thou
 moänt,'
 But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother, an' Sally says 'doänt!'

9

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at fust she wur all in a tew,
 But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn toghether like birds on a beugh;
 An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire an' the loov o' God fur
 men,
 An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

10

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like Saätan as fell
 Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire—thaw theer's naw drinkin' i'
 Hell;
 Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf fro' the door,
 All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er as well as afoor.

11

Sa like a greät num-cumpus¹ I blubber'd awaäy o' the bed—
 'Weänt niver do it naw moor'; an' Sally looökt up an' she said,
 'I'll upowd it tha weänt; thou'rt like the rest o' the men,
 Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till tha does it ageän.
 Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I knaws, as knaws tha sa well,
 That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im tha'll foller 'im slick into
 Hell.'

12

'Naäy,' says I, 'fur I weänt goä sniffin' about the tap.'
 'Weänt tha?' she says, an' mysen I thowt i' mysen 'mayhap.'
 'Noä': an' I started awaäy like a shot, an' down to the Hinn,
 An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin' theer, yon big black bottle
 o' gin.

¹Non-cempos.

13

'That caps owt,'¹ says Sally, an' saw she begins to cry,
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says to 'er, 'Sally,' says I,
'Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the Lord an' the power ov 'is
Graäce,
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll looök my hennemy straït i' the faäce,
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let me looök at 'im then,
'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an' 'e's the Divil's oän sen.'

14

An' I wur down i' the mouth, couldn't do naw work an' all,
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an' poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an' sattled 'ersen o' my knee,
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till ageän I feel'd mysen free.

15

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk stood a-gawmin'² in,
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd istancead of a quart o' gin;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—an' I wur chousin' the wife,
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur it nobbut to saäve my life;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick ov 'is airm, an' 'e shaws
it to me,
'Feäl thou this! thou can't graw this upo' watter!' says he.
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as candles was lit,
'Thou moänt do it,' he says, 'tha mun breäk 'im off bit by bit.'
'Thou'rt but a Methody-man,' says Parson, and laäys down
'is 'at,
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but I respecks tha fur that';
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks down fro' the 'All to see,
An' 'e spansks 'is 'and into mine, 'fur I respecks that,' says 'e;
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a wind fro' far an' wide,
And browt me the booöts to be cobbled fro' hafe the coontryside.

16

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall stan to my dying daäy;
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother kind of a waäy,
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im, an' puts 'im back i'
the light.

17

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a quart? Naw doubt:
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an' fowt it out.
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I cared to taäste,
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur I'd feäl mysen cleän
disgraäced.

¹That's beyond everything.

²Staring vacantly.

18

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My lass, when I cooms to die,
Smash the bottle to smithers, the Divil's in 'im,' said I.
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if Sally be left aloän,
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke 'im afoor the Throän.

19

Coom thou 'eer—yon laädy a-steppin' along the streeät,
Doesn't tha know 'er—sa pretty, an' feät, an' neät, an' sweeät?
Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe ammost spick-span-new,
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a codlin¹ wesh'd i' the dew.

20

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be a-goin to dine,
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings puddin'² an' Adam's wine;
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä fur it down to the Hinn,
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood, noä, not fur Sally's oän kin.

1880

THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS³

1

Milk for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it mun be the time about now
When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end close wi' her paäils fro'
the cow.
Eh! tha be new to the plaäce—thou'rt gaäpin'—doesn't tha see
I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was sweet upo' me?

2

Naäy to be sewer it be past 'er time. What maäkes 'er sa laäte?
Goä to the laäne at the back, an' looök thruf Maddison's gaäte!

3

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may 'a lighted to-night upo' one.
Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I niver not listen'd to noän!
So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my oän kettle theere o' the hob,
An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the second, an' Steevie an'
Rob.

4

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou sees that i' spite o' the
men
I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two 'oonderd a-year to mysen;
Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es ony lass i' the Shere;
An' thou be es pretty a Tabby, but Robby I seed thruf ya theere.

¹Apple.

²A pudding made with the first milk of the cow after calving.

³The spinster has named her four tom-cats after her four rejected sweet-hearts.

5

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin, an' I beänt not vaäin,
 But I niver wur downright hugly, thaw soom 'ud 'a thowt ma
 plaäin,
 An' I wasn't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons, ye said I wur pretty i'
 pinks,
 An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt sich a fool as ye thinks;
 Ye was stroäkin ma down wi' the 'air, as I be a-stroäkin o' you,
 But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I wur sewer that it couldn't
 be true;
 Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye knaw'd it wur pleasant to 'ear,
 Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty, but my two 'oonderd a-year.

6

D'ya mind the murnin' when we was a-walkin' together, an'
 stood
 By the claäy'd-ooop pond, that the foälk be sa scared at, i'
 Gigglesby wood,
 Wheer the poor wench drowndid hersen, black Sal, es 'ed been
 disgraäced?
 An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur a-creeäpin about my waäist;
 An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's gittin' ower fond,
 I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt foot fust i' the pond;
 And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa well, as I did that daäy,
 Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha hoickt my feet wi' a flop fro'
 the claäy.
 Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy taäil, tha may gie ma a
 kiss,
 Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoam an wur niver sa nigh
 saäyin' Yis.
 But wa boäth was i' such a clat we was shaämed to cross
 Gigglesby Greeän,
 Fur a cat may looök at a king thou knaws but the cat mun be
 cleän.
 Sa we boäth on us kep out o' sight o' the winders o' Gigglesby
 Hinn—
 Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet! they pricks cleän thruf to the
 skin—
 An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the brokken shed i' the laäne at
 the back,
 Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once, an' thou runn'd oop o'
 the thack;¹
 An' tha squee'dg'd my 'and i' the shed, fur theere we was forced
 to 'ide,
 Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin', and one o' the Tommies
 beside.

¹Thatch.

7

Theere, now, what art' a mewin at, Steevie? for owt I can tell—
Robby wur fust to be sewer, or I mowt 'a liked tha as well.

8

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the while I wur chaängin' my
gown,
An' I thowt shall I chaänge my staäte? hut, O Lörd, upo'
coomin' down—
My bran-new carpet es fresh es a midder o' flowers i' Maäy—
Why 'edn't tha wiped thy shoes? it wur clatted all ower wi' claäy.
An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I seed that it couldn't be,
An' Robby I gied tha a raätin that sattled thy coortin ö' me.
An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we was a-cleänin' the floor.
That a man be a durty thing an' a trouble an' plague wi' indoor.
But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to tha moor na the rest,
But I couldn't 'a lived wi' a man an' I knaws it be all fur the best.

9

Naäy—let ma stroäk tha down till I maäkes tha es smooth es silk,
But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou'd not 'a been worth thy
milk,
Thou'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but 'a left me the work to do,
And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so es all that I 'ears be true;
But I loovs tha to maäke thysen 'appy, an' soa purr awaäy, my
dear,
Thou 'ed wellnight purr'd ma awaäy fro' my oän two 'oonderd
a-year.

10

Sweärin agean, you Toms, as ye used to do twelve year sin'!
Ye niver 'eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it wur at a dog coomin' in,
An' boath o' ye mun be fools to be hallus a-shawin' your claws,
Fur I niver cared nothink for neither—an' one o' ye deäd ye
knaws!
Coom give hoäver then, weant ye? I warrant ye soom fine daäy—
Theere, lig down—I shall hev to gie one or tother awaäy.
Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye shant hev a drop fro' the
paäil.
Steevie be right good manners bang thruf to the tip o' the taäil.

Robby, git down wi'tha, wilt tha? let Steevie coom oop o' my
knee.

Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh been the Steevie fur me!
Robby wur fust to be sewer, 'e wur burn an' bred i' the 'ouse,
But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver patted a mouse.

12

An' I beänt not vaäin, but I knaws I 'ed led tha a quieter life
 Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! "A faäithful an' loovin' wife!"
 An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an' thy windmill oop o' the
 croft,
 Tha thouw tha would marry ma, did tha? but that wur a bit
 ower soft,
 Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi' a niced red faäce, an' es
 cleän
 Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a bran-new 'eäd o' the Queeän,
 An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen', fur, Steevie, tha kep it sa
 neät
 That I niver not spied sa much es a poppy along wi' the wheät,
 An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an' seeädin' tha haäted to see;
 'Twur es bad es a battle-twig¹ 'ere i' my oän blue chaumber
 to me.
 Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur I could 'a taäen to tha well,
 But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a bouncin' boy an' a gell.

13

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I be mysen o' my cats,
 But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I hevn't naw likin' fur brats;
 Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop, an' they goäs fur a walk,
 Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an' doesn't not 'inder the talk!
 But their bottles o' pap, an' their mucky bibs, an' the clats an'
 the clouts,
 An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces an' maäkin' ma deäf wi'
 their shouts,
 An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if they was set upo' springs,
 An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions, an' saäyin' ondecant things,
 An' a-callin' ma 'hugly' mayhap to my faäce, or a teärin' my
 gown—
 Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them Tommies—Steevie git down.

14

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you. I tell'd ya, na moor o'
 that!
 Tom, lig theere o' the cushion, an' tother Tom 'ere o' the mat.

15

Theerel I ha' master'd *them*! Hed I married the Tommies—
 O Lord,
 To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I couldn't 'a stuck by my
 word.

¹Earwig.

To be horder'd about, an' waäked, when Molly 'd put out the
light,
By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at ony hour o' the night!
An' the taäble staäin'd wi' 'is aäle, an' the mud o' 'is boots o'
the stairs,
An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse, an' the mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the
chairs!
An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a let me 'a hed my oän'
waäy,
Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when they 'evn't a word to saäy.

16

An' I sits i' my oän parlour, an' sarved by my oän little lass,
Wi' my oän little garden outside, an' my oän bed o' sparrow-
grass,
An' my oän door-poorch wi' the woodbine an' jessmine a-dressin'
it greeän,
An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple¹ a roäbin' the 'ouse like a
Queeän.

17

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens es I be abroad i' the
laänes,
When I goäs fur to coomfut the poor es be down wi' their
haäches an' their pääins:
An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o' meät when it beänt too dear,
They maäkes ma a graäter Laädy nor 'er i' the mansion theer,
Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how much to spare or to spend;
An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if soä pleäse God, to the hend.

18

Mew! mew!—Bess wi' the milk! what ha maäde our Molly sa
laäte?
It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an' theere—it be strikin'
height—
'Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf' well—I 'eärd 'er a maäkin' e'
moän,
An' I thowt to mysen 'thank God that I hevn't naw cauf or
my oän.'

Theere!

Set it down!

Now Robby!

You Tommies shall waäit to-night
Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap—an' it sarves ye right.

¹Jackman clematis.

OWD ROA¹

Naäy, noä mander² o' use to be callin' 'im Roä, Roä, Roä,
Fur the dog's stoän-deäf, an' e's blind, 'e can naither stan' nor
goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge as 'appy as iver I can,
Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I iver owäd mottal man.

Thou's rode of 'is back when a babby, afoor thou was gotten too
owd,
Fur 'e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e fowt; 'e could howd 'is oan,
An' Roä was the dog as knew'd when an' wheere to bury his
boane.

An' 'e kep his heäd hoop like a king, an' 'e'd niver not down wi'
'is taäil,
Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be shaämed on, when we was i'
Howlaby Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived, that, Dick, when 'e
cooms to be deäd,
I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom soort of a sarvice reäd.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parliament man 'at stans fur
us 'ere,
An' I'd voät fur 'im, my oan sen, if 'e could but stan fur the
Shere.

'Faäithful an' True'—them words be i' Scriptur—an' Faäithful
an' True
Ull be fun' upo' four short legs ten times fur one upo' two.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two but I knaws they runs upo'
four,³—
Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha 'eärs it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when we lived i' Howlaby Daäle,
Ten year sin—Naäy—naäy! tha mun nobbut hev' one glass of
aäle.

¹Old Rover.

²Manner.

³'Ou' as in 'house'.

Straänge an' owd-farran'd¹ the 'ouse, an' belt² long afoor my
daäy

Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd³ an' twined like a band
o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs, 'ud coom at the fall o' the
year,

An' saddle their ends upo' stools to pictur the door-poorch theere,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds stannin' theere o' the brokken
stick;⁴

An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'⁵ as grow'd hall ower the brick;

An' theere i' the 'ouse one night—but it's down, an' all on it now
Goan into mangles an' tonups, an' raäved slick thruf by the
plow—

Theere, when the 'ouse wur a house, one night I wur sittin
aloän,

Wi' Roäver athurt my fceät, an' sleeäpin still as a stoän,

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowd as this, an' the midders as
white,

An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop wi' the windle⁶ that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin alongside Roäver, but I wur əwaäke,
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things—Doänt maäke thysen sick
wi' the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their songs an' 'ed 'ed their
beer,

An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was nobbut three, an' noän on
'em theere.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the Ghoäst an' dussn't not sleeäp
i' the 'ouse,

But Dicky, the Ghoäst moüstlins' was nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst⁷ at the night, an' the daäle was all of a
thaw,

Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like a long black snaäke i'
the snaw,

¹Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.

²Built.

³Twizzen'd,' twisted.

⁴A coat of arms over the door with an eagle on a staff *ragulé*.

⁵Ivy.

⁶Drifted snow.

⁷'Moüstlins,' for the most part, generally.

⁸Once.

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw slushin' down fro' the bank
to the beck,
An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o' the good owd times 'at
was goan,
An' the munney they maäde by the war, an' the times 'at was
coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a gawin' to let in furriners'
wheät,
Howiver was British farmers to stan' agcän o' their fecät.

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an' to paäy my men?
An' all along o' the feller¹ as turn'd 'is back of hissen.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us, we couldn't ha' 'eärd tha
call,
Sa Moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha down, an' thy craädle
an' all;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi' tha then 'ed gotten wer
läve,
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by cause o' the Christmas
Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when Moother 'ed gotten to bed,
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an' the Freeä Traäde runn'd
'i my 'ead,

'Till I dreäm'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I says to him 'Squire,
ya're laäte,'
Then I seed at 'is faäce wur as red as the Yule-block theer i'
the graäte.

An' 'e says 'can ya paäy me the rent to-night?' an' I says to 'im
'Noä,'
An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,² "Then hout to-night
tha shall goä.'

'Tha'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin ma hout upo' Christmas
Eäve?'
Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin' my
slicäve.

¹Sir Robert Peel.

²Arm.

An' I thowt as 'e'd goän cleän-wud,¹ fur I noäwaäys knaw'd 'is intent;

An' I says 'Git awaäy, ya beäst,' an' I fetcht 'im a kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tummled up stairs, fur I 'eärd 'im, as if 'e'd 'a brokken 'is neck,

An' I'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy chaumber door wouldn't sneck;²

An' I slep i' my chair ageän wi' my hairm hingin' down to the floor,

An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an' teürin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän, but I kick'd thy Moother istancead.

'What arta snorin' theere fur? the house is afire,' she said.

'Thy Moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about the gell o' the farm,
She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when there warn't not a mossel o' harm;

An' she didn't not solidly meän I wur gawin' that waäy to the bad,

Fur the gell³ was as howry a trollope as iver traäpes'd i' the squad.

But Moother was free of 'er tongue, as I offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,

Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she was nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says 'I'd be good to tha, Bess, if tha'd onywaäys let ma be good,'

But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the chair, an' screcäd like a Howl gone wud⁴—

'Ya mun run fur the lether.⁵ Git oop, if ya're onywaäys good for owt.'

And I says 'If I beänt noäwaäys—not nowadaäys—good fur nowt—

¹Mad.

²Latch.

³The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged in the mud.

⁴She half overturned me and shrieked like an owl gone mad.

⁵Ladder.

Yit I beänt sich a Nowt¹ of all Nowts as 'ull hallus do as 'e's bid.
'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then I seed 'er a-cryin', I did.

An' she beäld 'Ya mun saäve little Dick, an' be sharp about it
an' all,'

Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an' sets 'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder hin, when I gits to the top,
But the heät druv hout i' my heyes till I feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy Moother was howdin' the lether, an' tellin' me not to be
skeärd,

An' I wasn't afeärd, or I thinks leästwaäys as I wasn't afeärd;

But I couldn't see fur the smoäke whcere thou was a-liggin,
my lad,

An' Roäver was theree i' the chaumber a-yowlin' an' yaupin'
like mad;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an' a-squeälin', as if tha was bit,
An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the merk's² o' thy shou'der
yit;

Then I call'd out Roä, Roä, Roä, thaw I didn't haäfe think as
'e'd 'ear,

*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my bairn i' 'is mouth to the winder
theree !*

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as soon as 'e 'eärd 'is naämc,
Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptur 'at summun seed i' the flaäme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an' 'e promised a son to she,
An' Roä was as good as the Hangel i' saävin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says 'I mun gaw up ageän fur Roä.'
'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I tell'd 'er 'Yeäs I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder, an' clemm'd³ owd Roä
by the 'eäd,

An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I taäked 'im at fust fur
deäd;

¹ A thoroughly insignificant or worthless person.

² Mark.

³ Clutched.

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', an' seeäm'd as blind as a
poop,
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.¹ I couldn't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the barn, fur the barn
wouldn't burn
Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy, an' the wind wasn't
like to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e waggled 'is taäil fur a bit,
But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' crawin' all night, an' I 'ears
'em yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round, and thou was a-squeälin'
thysen,
An' Moother was naggin' an' groänin' an' moänin' an' naggin'
ageän;

An' I 'eard the bricks an' the baulks² rummle down when the
roof gev waäy,
Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin' an' roarin' like judgment
daäy.

Warm enew theree sewer-ly, but the barn was as cowl as owt,
An' we cuddled and huddled together, an' happt³ wersens oop
as we mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but Moother 'ed beän sa soäk'd wi' the
thaw
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that night, poor soul, i' the
straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when the rigtree⁴ was tummlin'
in—
Too laäte—but it's all ower now—hall hower—an' ten year sin;

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but I'll coom an' I'll squench
the light,
Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires—and soa little Dick, good-
night.

1889

¹'Buhbling,' a young unfledged bird.

²Beams.

³Wrapt ourselves.

⁴The beam that runs along the roof of the house just beneath the ridge.

THE CHURCH-WARDEN AND THE CURATE

I

Eh? good daäy! good daäy! thaw it bean't not mooch of a daäy,
Nasty, casselty¹ weather! an' mea haäfe down wi' my haäy!

2

How be the farm gittin on? noäways. Gittin on i'deeäd!
Why, tonups was haäfe on 'em fingers an' toäs, an' the mare
brokken-kneeäd,
An' pigs didn't sell at fall, an' wa lost wer Haldeny cow,
An' it beäts ma to know wot she died on, but wool's looking oop
ony how.

3

An' soä they've maäde tha a parson, an' thou'll git along, niver
fear,
Fur I beän chuch-warden mysen i' the parish fur fifteen year.
Well—sin ther beä chuch-wardens, ther mun be parsons an' all,
An' if t'öne stick alongside t'uther the chuch weänt happen
a fall.

4

Fur I wur a Baptis wonst, an' ageän the tithe an' the raäte,
Till I fun that it warn't not the gaäinist² waäy to the narra
Gaäte.
An' I can't abeär 'em, I can't, fur a lot on 'em coom'd ta-year³—
I wur down wi' the rheumatis then—to my pond to wesh thessens
there—
Sa I sticks like the ivin as long as I lives to the owd chuch now,
Fur they wesh'd their sins i' my pond, an' I doubts they poison'd
the cow.

5

Ay, an' ya seed the Bishop. They says 'at he coom'd fra nowt—
Burn i' traäde. Sa I warrants 'e niver said haafe wot 'e thowt,
But 'e creeäpt an' 'e crawl'd along, till 'e feeäld 'e could howd
'is oän,
'Then 'e married a greät Yerl's darter, an' sits o' the Bishop's
throän.

¹Casselty = casualty, chancey.

²Gaäinist, nearest.

³Ta-year, this year.

6

Now I'll gie tha a bit o' my mind an' tha weant be taäkin' offence,
 Fur thou be a big scholard now wi' a hoonderd haäcre o' sense—
 But sich an obstropulous lad—naay, naay—fur I minds tha
 sa well,
 Tha'd niver not hopple¹ thy tongue, an' the tongue's sit afire o'
 Hell,
 As I says to my missis to-daay, when she hurl'd a plaäte at the
 cat
 An' anoother ageän my noäse. Ya was niver sa bad as that.

7

But I minds when i' Howlabey beck won daäy ya was ticklin' o'
 trout,
 An' keeäper 'e seed ya an roon'd, an' 'e beäl'd² to ya 'Lad coom
 hout'
 An' ya stood oop naäkt i' the beck, an' ya tell'd 'im to knaw
 his awn plaäce
 An' ya call'd 'im a clown, ya did, an' ya thraw'd the fish in 'is
 faäce,
 An' 'e torn'd as red as a stag-tuckey's³ wattles, but theer an' then
 I coämb'd 'im down, fur I promised ya'd niver not do it ageän.

8

An' I cotch'd tha wonst i' my garden, when thou was a height-
 year-howd,
 An' I fun thy pockets as full o' my pippins as iver they'd 'owd,
 An' thou was as peärky as owt, an' tha maäde me as mad as mad,
 But I says to tha 'keeäp 'em, an' welcome' fur thou was the
 Parson's lad.

9

An Parson 'e 'ears on it all, an' then taäkes kindly to me,
 An' then I wur chose Chuch-warden an' coom'd to the top o'
 the tree,
 Fur Quolity's hall my friends, an' they maäkes me a help to
 the poor,
 When I gits the plaäte fuller o' Soondays nor ony chuch-warden
 afoor,
 Fur if iver thy feyther 'ed riled me I kep' mysen meeäk as a lamb,
 An' saw by the Graäce o' the Lord, Mr. Harry, I ham wot I ham.

¹'Hopple' or 'hobble,' to tie the legs of a skittish cow when she is being milked.

²'Beal'd,' bellowed.

³'Stag-tuckey,' turkey-cock.

IO

But Parson 'e *will* speäk out, saw, now 'e be sixty-seven,
He'll niver swap Owlby an' Scratby fur owt but the Kingdom o'
Heaven;

An' thou'll be 'is Curate 'ere, but, if iver tha meäns to git 'igher,
Tha mun tackle the sins o' the Wo'ld,¹ an' not the faults o' the
Squire.

An' I reckons tha'll light of a livin' somewheers i' the Wowd²
or the Fen,

If tha cottons down to thy betters, an' keeäps thysen to thysen.
But niver not speäk plaain out, if tha wants to git forrards a bit,
But creeäp along the hedge-bottoms, an' thou'll be a Bishop yit.

II

Naäy, but tha *mun* speäk hout to the Baptises here i' the town,
Fur moäst on 'em talks ageän tithe, an' I'd like tha to preäch
'em down,

Fur *they*'ve bin a-preächin' *meä* down, they hev, an' I haätes
'em now,

Fur they leäved their nasty sins i' *my* pond, an' it poison'd the
cow.

1892

¹'Wo'ld,' the world. Short *o*.

²'Wowd,' wold.

Poems of 1880-1892

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

(Founded on an Irish Legend A.D. 700)

1

I was the chief of the race—he had stricken my father dead—
But I gather'd my fellows together, I swore I would strike off
his head.

Each of them look'd like a king, and was noble in birth as in
worth,

And each of them boasted he sprang from the oldest race upon
earth.

Each was as brave in the fight as the bravest hero of song,
And each of them liefer had died than have done one another a
wrong.

He lived on an isle in the ocean—we sail'd on a Friday morn—
He that had slain my father the day before I was born.

2

And we came to the isle in the ocean, and there on the shore
was he.

But a sudden blast blew us out and away thro' a boundless sea.

3

And we came to the Silent Isle that we never had touch'd at
before,

Where a silent ocean always broke on a silent shore,
And the brooks glitter'd on in the light without sound, and the
long waterfalls

Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base of the mountain walls,
And the poplar and cypress unshaken by storm flourish'd up
beyond sight,

And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an unbelievable height,
And high in the heaven above it there flicker'd a songless lark,
And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull couldn't low, and the
dog couldn't bark.

And round it we went, and thro' it, but never a murmur, a
breath—

It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it quiet as death,
And we hated the beautiful Isle, for whenever we strove to speak
Our voices were thinner and fainter than any flittermouse-
shriek;¹

¹*Flittermouse* is an old word for a bat.

And the men that were mighty of tongue and could raise such a
battle-cry
That a hundred who heard it would rush on a thousand lances
and die—
O they to be dumb'd by the charm!—so fluster'd with anger
were they
They almost fell on each other; but after we sail'd away.

4

And we came to the Isle of Shouting, we landed, a score of wild
birds
Cried from the topmost summit with human voices and words;
Once in an hour they cried, and whenever their voices peal'd
The steer fell down at the plow and the harvest died from the
field,
And the men dropt dead in the valleys and half of the cattle
went lame,
And the roof sank in on the hearth, and the dwelling broke into
flame;
And the shouting of these wild birds ran into the hearts of my
crew,
Till they shouted along with the shouting and seized one another
and slew;
But I drew them the one from the other; I saw that we could
not stay,
And we left the dead to the birds and we sail'd with our wounded
away.

5

And we came to the Isle of Flowers: their breath met us out
on the seas,
For the Spring and the middle Summer sat each on the lap of
the breeze;
And the red passion-flower to the cliffs, and the dark-blue
clematis, clung,
And starr'd with a myriad blossom the long convolvulus hung;
And the topmost spire of the mountain was lilies in lieu of snow,
And the lilies like glaciers winded down, running out below
Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy, the blaze of gorse, and the
blush
Of millions of roses that sprang without leaf or a thorn from the
bush;
And the whole isle-side flashing down from the peak without
ever a tree
Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky to the blue of the sea;

And we roll'd upon capes of crocus and vaunted our kith and
 our kin,
 And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and chanted the triumph of
 Finn,
 Till each like a golden image was pollen'd from head to feet
 And each was as dry as a cricket, with thirst in the middle-day
 heat.
 Blossom and blossom, and promise of blossom, but never a fruit!
 And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we hated the isle that was
 mute,
 And we tore up the flowers by the million and flung them in
 bight and bay,
 And we left but a naked rock, and in anger we sail'd away.

6

And we came to the Isle of Fruits: all round from the cliffs and
 the capes,
 Purple or amber, dangled a hundred fathom of grapes,
 And the warm melon lay like a little sun on the tawny sand,
 And the fig ran up from the beach and rioted over the land,
 And the mountain arose like a jewell'd throne thro' the fragrant
 air,
 Glowing with all-colour'd plums and with golden masses of pear,
 And the crimson and scarlet of berries that flamed upon bine
 and vine,
 But in every berry and fruit was the poisonous pleasure of wine;
 And the peak of the mountain was apples, the hugest that ever
 were seen,
 And they prest, as they grew, on each other, with hardly a
 leaflet between,
 And all of them redder than rosiest health or than utterest shame,
 And setting, when Even descended, the very sunset aflame;
 And we stay'd three days, and we gorged and we madden'd, till
 every one drew
 His sword on his fellow to slay him, and ever they struck and
 they slew;
 And myself, I had eaten but sparely, and fought till I sunder'd
 the fray,
 Then I bad them remember my father's death, and we sail'd
 away.

7

And we came to the Isle of Fire: we were lured by the light from
 afar,
 For the peak sent up one league of fire to the Northern Star;

Lured by the glare and the blare, but scarcely could stand
 upright,
 For the whole isle shudder'd and shook like a man in a mortal
 affright;
 We were giddy besides with the fruits we had gorged, and so
 crazed that at last
 There were some leap'd into the fire; and away we sail'd, and
 we past
 Over that undersea isle, where the water is clearer than air:
 Down we look'd: what a garden! O bliss, what a Paradise there!
 Towers of a happier time, low down in a rainbow deep
 Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep!
 And three of the gentlest and best of my people, whate'er I
 could say,
 Plunged head down in the sea, and the Paradise trembled away.

8

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where the heavens lean low
 on the land,
 And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd o'er us a sunbright
 hand,
 Then it open'd and dropt at the side of each man, as he rose
 from his rest,
 Bread enough for his need till the labourless day dipt under the
 West;
 And we wander'd about it and thro' it. O never was time so
 good!
 And we sang of the triumphs of Finn,¹ and the boast of our
 ancient blood,
 And we gazed at the wandering wave as we sat by the gurgle
 of springs,
 And we chanted the songs of the Bards and the glories of fairy
 kings;
 But at length we began to be weary, to sigh, and to stretch and
 yawn,
 Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the sunbright hand of the
 dawn,
 For there was not an enemy near, but the whole green Isle was
 our own,
 And we took to playing at ball, and we took to throwing the
 stone,
 And we took to playing at battle, but that was a perilous play,
 For the passion of battle was in us, we slew and we sail'd away.

¹A legendary leader of the Irish, supposed to have been killed in battle
 in A.D. 284.

9

And we past to the Isle of Witches and heard their musical cry—
 'Come to us, O come, come' in the stormy red of a sky
 Dashing the fires and the shadows of dawn on the beautiful
 shapes,
 For a wild witch naked as heaven stood on each of the loftiest
 capes,
 And a hundred ranged on the rock like white sea-birds in a row,
 And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced on the wrecks in the
 sand below,
 And a hundred splash'd from the ledges, and bosom'd the burst
 of the spray,
 But I knew we should fall on each other, and hastily sail'd away.

10

And we came in an evil time to the Isle of the Double Towers,¹
 One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved all over with flowers,
 But an earthquake always moved in the hollows under the dells,
 And they shock'd on each other and butted each other with
 clashing of bells,
 And the daws flew out of the Towers and jangled and wrangled
 in vain,
 And the clash and boom of the bells rang into the heart and the
 brain,
 Till the passion of battle was on us, and all took sides with the
 Towers,
 There were some for the clean-cut stone, there were more for
 the carven flowers,
 And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd over us all the day,
 For the one half slew the other, and after we sail'd away.

11

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who had sail'd with St.
 Brendan of yore,
 He had lived ever since on the Isle and his wipters were fifteen
 score,
 And his voice was low as from other worlds, and his eyes were
 sweet,
 And his white hair sank to his heels and his white beard fell
 to his feet,
 And he spake to me, 'O Maeldune, let be this purpose of thine!
 Remember the words of the Lord when he told us "Vengeance
 is mine!"
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in war or in single strife,
 Thy fathets have slain his fathers, each taken a life for a life,

¹Hallam Tennyson says that this stanza symbolizes the strife between Protestants and Catholics.

Thy father had slain his father, how long shall the murder last?
Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer the Past to be Past.'
And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard and we pray'd as we heard
him pray,
And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and sadly we sail'd away.

12

And we came to the Isle we were blown from, and there on the
shore was he,
The man that had slain my father. I saw him and let him be.
O weary was I of the travel, the trouble, the strife and the sin,
When I landed again, with a tithe of my men, on the Isle of Finn.

1880

EARLY SPRING

I

Once more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throistles too.

2

Opens a door in Heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

3

Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods,

4

The woods with living airs
How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.

5

O follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up
Sere, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure!

6

Past, Future glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell!

7

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

8

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

1884

an early poem revised

THE SNOWDROP .

Many, many welcomes
February fair-maid,
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the gay time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes
February fair-maid!

1889

THE THROSTLE

'Summer is coming, summer is coming.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,'
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
'New, new, new, new!' Is it then so new
That you should carol so madly?

'Love again, song again, nest again, young again,'
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

'Here again, here, here, here, happy year!'
O warble unhidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

1889

THE OAK

Live thy Life,
Young and old,
Like yon oak,
Bright in spring,
Living gold;

Summer-rich
Then; and then
Autumn-changed,
Soberer-hued
Gold again.

All his leaves
Fall'n at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough,
Naked strength.

1889

RETICENCE¹

Not to Silence would I build
 A temple in her naked field;
 Not to her would raise a shrine:
 She no goddess is of mine;
 But to one of finer sense,
 Her half sister, Reticence.
 Latest of her worshippers,
 I would shrine her in my verse!
 Not like Silence shall she stand,
 Finger-lipt, but with right hand
 Moving toward her lip, and there
 Hovering, thoughtful, poised in air.
 Her garment slips, the left hand holds
 Her up-gather'd garment folds,
 And veils a breast more fair to me
 Than aught of Anadyomené!²
 Near the shrine, but half in sun,
 I would have a river run,
 Such as never overflows
 With flush of rain, or molten snows,
 Often shallow, pierced with light,
 Often deep beyond the sight,
 Here and there about the lawn
 Wholly mute, but ever drawn
 Under either grassy brink
 In many a silver loop and link
 Variously from its far spring,
 With long tracts of murmuring,
 Partly river, partly brook,
 Which in one delicious nook,
 Where the doubtful shadows play,
 Lightly lipping, breaks away;
 Thence, across the summit hurl'd,
 Showers in a whisper o'er the world.

¹This poem was first published in the annotated edition of Tennyson's poems after his death.

²The goddess Aphrodite (Venus) pictured as rising from the sea.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD¹

Brooks, for they call'd you so that knew you best,
 Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth my rhymes,
 How oft we two have heard St. Mary's chimes!
 How oft the Cantab supper, host and guest,
 Would echo helpless laughter to your jest!
 How oft with him we paced that walk of limes,
 Him,² the lost light of those dawn-golden times,
 Who loved you well! Now both are gone to rest.
 You man of humorous-melancholy mark,
 Dead of some inward agony—is it so?
 Our kindlier, trustier Jacques, past away!
 I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:
Σκιάς ὄνειρος—dream of a shadow, go—
 God bless you. I shall join you in a day.

(written 1874) 1880

PREFATORY POEM TO MY
 BROTHER'S SONNETS³

MIDNIGHT, JUNE 30, 1879

1

Midnight—in no midsummer tune
 The breakers lash the shores:
 The cuckoo of a joyless June
 Is calling out of doors:

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own
 To that which looks like rest,
 True brother, only to be known
 By those who love thee best.

2

Midnight—and joyless June gone by,
 And from the deluged park
 The cuckoo of a worse July
 Is calling thro' the dark:

¹One of Tennyson's most intimate friends at Cambridge.

²*Him* refers to Arthur Hallam.

³Charles, Alfred's favourite brother (see above, pages 27, 27, 28, 45), died in May, 1879. A volume containing 342 of his sonnets, edited by James Spedding and prefaced with this poem, was published by Kegan Paul & Co. in 1880

But thou art silent underground,
And o'er thee streams the rain,
'True poet, surely to be found
When Truth is found again.

3

And, now to these unsummer'd skies
The summer bird is still,
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries
From out a phantom hill;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away,
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with thee,
As all my hopes were thine—
As all thou wert was one with me,
May all thou art be mine!

1880

'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'¹

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed—'O venusta Sirmio!'
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-hundred years ago,
'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wander'd to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

1883

IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON²

Nightingales warbled without,
Within was weeping for thee:
Shadows of three dead men

¹This poem was written by Tennyson after a visit to the Island of Sirmio on the Lago di Garda in 1880. The lines refer to a famous poem by Tennyson's favourite Latin lyric poet, Catullus, and also to the death of his brother Charles in the previous year.

²This poem concerns the funeral of Tennyson's friend Sir John Simeon of Swainston, Isle of Wight. The other two friends mentioned were Arthur Hallam (d. 1833) and Henry Lushington (d. 1855).

Walk'd in the walks with me,
Shadows of three dead men and thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods:
The Master was far away:
Nightingales warbled and sang
Of a passion that lasts but a day;
Still in the house in his coffin the Prince of courtesy lay.

'Two dead men have I known
In courtesy like to thee:
'Two dead men have I loved
With a love that ever will be:
'Three dead men have I loved and thou art last of the three.

1874

IN MEMORIAM¹

W. G. WARD

Farewell, whose living like I shall not find,
Whose Faith and Work were bells of full accord,
My friend, the most unworldly of mankind,
Most generous of all Ultramontanes, Ward,
How subtle at tierce and quart of mind with mind,
How loyal in the following of thy Lord!

1899

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA²

1

At times our Britain cannot rest,
At times her steps are swift and rash;
She moving, at her girdle clash
The golden keys of East and West.

2

Not swift or rash, when late she lent
The sceptres of her West, her East,
To one, that ruling has increased
Her greatness and her self-content.

¹For W. G. Ward see Introduction, page 44.

²Viceroy of India from 1884-1888. The poet's second son Lionel caught jungle fever on a visit to him in India and died in the Red Sea on his way home, in his thirty-second year. (See Introduction, page 48.)

3

Your rule has made the people love
Their ruler. Your viceregal days
Have added fulness to the phrase
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

4

But since your name will grow with Time,
Not all, as honouring your fair fame
Of Statesman, have I made the name
A golden portal to my rhyme:

5

But more, that you and yours may know
From me and mine, how dear a debt
We owed you, and are owing yet
To you and yours, and still would owe.

6

For he—your India was his Fate,
And drew him over sea to you—
He fain had ranged her thro' and thro',
To serve her myriads and the State,—

7

A soul that, watch'd from earliest youth,
And on thro' many a brightening year,
Had never swerved for craft or fear,
By one side-path, from simple truth;

8

Who might have chased and claspt Renown
And caught her chaplet here—and there
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air
The flame of life went wavering down;

9

But ere he left your fatal shore,
And lay on that funereal boat,
Dying, 'Unspeakable' he wrote
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no more;

10

And sacred is the latest word;
 And now the Was, the Might-have-been,
 And those lone rites I have not seen,
 And one drear sound I have not heard,

11

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,
 Not there to bid my boy farewell,
 When That within the coffin fell,
 Fell—and flash'd into the Red Sea,

12

Beneath a hard Arabian moon
 And alien stars. To question, why
 The sons before the fathers die,
 Not mine! and I may meet him soon;

13

But while my life's late eve endures,
 Nor settles into hueless gray,
 My memories of his briefer day
 Will mix with love for you and yours.

1889

TO VIRGIL¹

*Written at the request of the Mantuans for the Nineteenth
 Centenary of Virgil's Death*

I

Roman Virgil, thou that singest
 Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
 Ilion falling, Rome arising,
 wars, and filial faith, and Didø's pyre;

2

Landscape-lover, lord of language
 more than he that sang the Works and Days,
 All the chosen coin of fancy
 flashing out from many a golden phrase;

¹Stanza 1 describes the *Aeneid*, Stanzas 2 and 3 the *Georgics*, Stanzas 4 and 5 *The Eclogues*, 5 referring to the famous fourth *Eclogue* which was regarded by the early Christians and throughout the Middle Ages as a Christian prophecy. Stanza 6 refers especially to *Aeneid*, bk. 6, line 724, *et seq.*

3

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
 tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;
 All the charm of all the Muses
 often flowering in a lonely word;

4

Poet of the happy Tityrus
 piping underneath his beechen bowers;
 Poet of the poet-satyr
 whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers;

5

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
 in the blissful years again to be,
 Summers of the snakeless meadow,
 unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

6

Thou that seest Universal
 Nature moved by Universal Mind;
 Thou majestic in thy sadness
 at the doubtful doom of human kind;

7

Light among the vanish'd ages;
 star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
 Golden branch amid the shadows,¹
 kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

8

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
 fallen every purple Caesar's dome—
 Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
 sound for ever of Imperial Rome—,

9

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
 and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
 I, from out the Northern Island
 sunder'd once from all the human race,

10

I salute thee, Mantovano,
 I that loved thee since my day began,
 Wielder of the stateliest measure
 ever moulded by the lips of man.

1892

¹See *Aeneid*, bk. 6, line 254.

MILTON¹

Alcaics

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for ages;
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrëan
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset—
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

1864

POETS AND THEIR BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Hendecasyllabics

Old poets foster'd under friendlier skies,
 Old Virgil who would write ten lines, they say,
 At dawn, and lavish all the golden day
 To make them wealthier in his readers' eyes;
 And you, old popular Horace, you the wise
 Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd lay,
 And you, that wear a wreath of sweeter bay,
 Catullus, whose dead songster² never dies;
 If, glancing downward on the kindly sphere
 'That once had roll'd you round and round the Sun,
 You see your Art still shrined in human shelves,
 You should be jubilant that you flourish'd here
 Before the Love of Letters, overdone,
 Had swamp'd the sacred poets with themselves.

1885

¹These lines are founded on the Greek alcaic metre rather than on the Latin.

²The reference is to Catullus's poems about his mistress Lesbia's tame sparrow.

DUET FROM BECKET

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand,
One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it—he, it is he,
Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

1885

SONG FROM QUEEN MARY

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!
Beauty passes like a breath and love is lost in loathing:
Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the world is nothing—
Low, lute, low!
Love will hover round the flowers when they first awaken;
Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be overtaken;
Low, my lute! oh low, my lute! we fade and are forsaken—
Low, dear lute, low!

1875

SONG FROM THE FORESTERS

To sleep! to sleep! The long bright day is done,
And darkness rises from the fallen sun.
To sleep! to sleep!
Whate'er thy joys, thy vanish with the day;
Whate'er thy griefs, in sleep they fade away.
To sleep! to sleep!
Sleep, mournful heart, and let the past be past!
Sleep, happy soul! all life will sleep at last.
To sleep! to sleep!

1891

SONG FROM THE PROMISE OF MAY

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,
 Wi' the wild white rose, an' the woodbine sa gaäy,
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue—
 What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
 When ye thowt there were nawbody watchin' o' you,
 And you an' your Sally was forkin' the haäy,
 At the end of the daäy,
 For the last loäd hoäm?

What did we do, and what did we saäy,
 Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa graäy,
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue—
 Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,
 What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,
 When me an' my Sally was forkin' the haäy,
 At the end of the daäy,
 For the last loäd hoäm?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
 Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at plaäy,
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue?
 Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to you;
 For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be true,
 To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
 Till the end of the daäy,
 And the last loäd hoäm.

1886

TO MARY BOYLE¹

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I

'Spring-flowers'! While you still delay to take
 Your leave of Town,
 Our elmtree's ruddy-hearted blossom-flake
 Is fluttering down.

2

Be truer to your promise. There! I heard
 Our cuckoo call.
 Be needle to the magnet of your word,
 Nor wait, till all

¹Well known as a writer and artist under the initials "E.V.B." She was the aunt of Hallam Tennyson's wife, née Audrey Boyle. Stanzas 7-10 refer to the Reform Bill riots. (See Introduction, page 22).

3

Our vernal bloom from every vale and plain
 And garden pass,
 And all the gold from each laburnum chain
 Drop to the grass.

4

Is memory with your Marian gone to rest,
 Dead with the dead?
 For ere she left us, when we met, you prest
 My hand, and said

5

'I come with your spring-flowers.' You came not, friend;
 My birds would sing,
 You heard not. Take then this spring-flower I send,
 This song of spring,

6

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own rhyme
 By mine old self,
 As I shall be forgotten by old Time,
 Laid on the shelf—

7

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the whitening sloe
 And kingcup blaze,
 And more than half a hundred years ago,
 In rick-fire days,

8

When Dives loathed the times, and paced his land
 In fear of worse,
 And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant hand
 Fill with *his* purse.

9

For lowly minds were madden'd to the height
 By tonguester tricks,
 And once—I well remember that red night
 When thirty ricks,

10

All flaming, made an English homestead Hell—
 These hands of mine
 Have helpt to pass a bucket from the well
 Along the line,

11

When this bare dome had not begun to gleam
Thro' youthful curls,
And you were then a lover's fairy dream,
His girl of girls;

12

And you, that now are lonely, and with Grief
Sit face to face,
Might find a flickering glimmer of relief
In change of place.

13

What use to brood? this life of mingled pains
And joys to me,
Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains
The Mystery.

14

Let golden youth bewail the friend, the wife,
For ever gone.
He dreams of that long walk thro' desert life
Without the one.

15

The silver year should cease to mourn and sigh—
Not long to wait—
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I
To that dim gate.

16

Take, read! and be the faults your Poet makes
Or many or few,
He rests content, if his young music wakes
A wish in you

17

To change our dark Queen-city, all her realm
Of sound and smoke,
For his clear heaven, and these few lanes of elm
And whispering oak.

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

I

The groundflame of the crocus breaks the mould,
 Fair Spring slides hither o'er the Southern sea,
 Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop cold
 That trembles not to kisses of the bee:
 Come, Spring, for now from all the dripping eaves
 The spear of ice has wept itself away,
 And hour by hour unfolding woodbine leaves
 O'er his uncertain shadow droops the day.
 She comes! The loosen'd rivulets run;
 The frost-bead melts upon her golden hair;
 Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,
 Now wraps her close, now arching leaves her bare
 To breaths of balmier air;

2

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome her,
 About her glance the tits, and shriek the jays,
 Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,
 The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,
 While round her brows a woodland culver¹ flits,
 Watching her large light eyes and gracious looks,
 And in her open palm a halcyon² sits
 Patient—the secret splendour of the brooks.
 Come, Spring! She comes on waste and wood,
 On farm and field: but enter also here,
 Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my blood,
 And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,
 Lodge with me all the year!

3

Once more a downy drift against the brakes,
 Self-darken'd in the sky, descending slow!
 But gladly see I thro' the wavering flakes
 Yon blanching apricot like snow in snow.
 These will thine eyes not brook in forest-paths,
 On their perpetual pine, nor round the beech;
 They fuse themselves to little spicy baths,
 Solved in the tender blushes of the peach;

¹Woodpigeon.

²Kingfisher.

They lose themselves and die
 On that new life that gems the hawthorn line;
 Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,
 And out once more in varnish'd glory shine
 Thy stars of celandine.

4

She floats across the hamlet, Heaven lours,
 But in the tearful splendour of her smiles
 I see the slowly-thickening chestnut towers
 Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.
 Now past her feet the swallow circling flies,
 A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet her hand;
 Her light makes rainbows in my closing eyes,
 I hear a charm of song thro' all the land.
 Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth is glad
 To roll her North below thy deepening dome,
 But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,
 And these low bushes dip their twigs in foam,
 Make all true hearths thy home.

Across my garden! and the thicket stirs,
 The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,
 The blackcap warbles, and the turtle purrs,
 The starling claps his tiny castanets.
 Still round her forehead wheels the woodland dove,
 And scatters on her throat the sparks of dew,
 The kingcup fills her footprint, and above
 Broaden the glowing isles of vernal blue.
 Hail ample presence of a Queen,
 Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,
 Whose mantle, every shade of glancing green,
 Flies back in fragrant breezes to display
 A tunic white as May!

6

She whispers, 'From the South I bring you balm,
 For on a tropic mountain was I born,
 While some dark dweller by the coco-palm
 Watch'd my far meadow zoned with airy morn;
 From under rose a muffled moan of floods;
 I sat beneath a solitude of snow;
 There no one came, the turf was fresh, the woods
 Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their vales below.

I saw beyond their silent tops
 The steaming marshes of the scarlet cranes,
 The slant seas leaning on the mangrove copse,
 And summer basking in the sultry plains
 About a land of canes;

7

'Then from my vapour-girdle soaring forth
 I scaled the buoyant highway of the birds,
 And drank the dews and drizzle of the North,
 That I might mix with men, and hear their words
 On pathway'd plains; for—while my hand exults
 Within the bloodless heart of lowly flowers
 To work old laws of Love to fresh results,
 Thro' manifold effect of simple powers—
 I too would teach the man
 Beyond the darker hour to see the bright,
 That his fresh life may close as it began,
 The still-fulfilling promise of a light
 Narrowing the bounds of night.'

8

So wed thee with my soul, that I may mark
 The coming year's great good and varied ills,
 And new developments, whatever spark
 Be struck from out the clash of warring wills;
 Or whether, since our nature cannot rest,
 The smoke of war's volcano burst again
 From hoary deeps that belt the changeful West,
 Old Empires, dwellings of the kings of men;
 Or should those fail, that hold the helm,
 While the long day of knowledge grows and warms,
 And in the heart of this most ancient realm
 A hateful voice be utter'd, and alarms
 Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

9

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn
 Who reads thy gradual process, Holy Spring.
 Thy leaves possess the season in their turn,
 And in their time thy warblers rise on wing.
 How surely glidest thou from March to May,
 And changest, breathing it, the sullen wind,
 Thy scope of operation, day by day,
 Larger and fuller, like the human mind!

Thy warmth from bud to bud
 Accomplish that blind model in the seed,
 And men have hopes, which race the restless blood,
 That after many changes may succeed
 Life, which is Life indeed.

1889

written about 1831 or 1832

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

Tennyson said that this poem should be a sufficient biography of him for those of his friends who might wish to know about his life. But it is very difficult to make it fit the known facts. Probably he did not intend any exact chronological statement. Stanza 2 plainly refers to his early youth, when the poetic spirit first began to waken in him. Some have suggested that "*The Wizard*" means Sir Walter Scott, for whom Tennyson had a great admiration, but this is doubtful. Stanza 3 may refer to the unfavourable criticisms of "Christopher North", Croker and others (1832 and 1833), or it may (more probably), refer to the antagonism of the poet's Grandfather and Uncle (see Introduction, page 14, 15) and refer to a time before the publication of his first volume in 1830. Stanza 4 seems to refer to the period covered by the volumes of 1830 and 1832, and Stanza 5 to the English Idylls which began with *The Gardener's Daughter*, written in 1833. Stanza 6 refers to the beginning of Tennyson's Arthurian studies. So far as is known, he did not begin writing about Arthur until after Hallam's death, which is referred to in Stanza 7 as subsequent, but, no doubt, he had been studying the legends before. *The Lady of Shalott* for example is based on an Arthurian subject. Stanzas 7 and 8 describe Tennyson's slow recovery after Arthur Hallam's death and the development of his work through *In Memoriam* into the more humane and philosophic phases of his later life.

I

O young Mariner,
 You from the haven
 Under the sea-cliff,
 You that are watching
 The gray Magician
 With eyes of wonder.
I am Merlin,
 And *I* am dying,
I am Merlin
 Who follow the Gleam.

Mighty the Wizard
 Who found me at sunrise
 Sleeping, and woke me
 And learn'd me Magic!

Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated The Gleam.

3

Once at the croak of a Raven who crost it,
A barbarous people,
Blind to the magic,
And deaf to the melody,
Snarl'd at and cursed me.
A demon vexed me,
The light retreated,
The landskip darken'd,
The melody deaden'd,
The Master whisper'd
'Follow the Gleam.'

4

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted The Gleam.

5

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on

Silent river,
 Silvery willow,
 Pasture and plowland,
 Innocent maidens,
 Garrulous children,
 Homestead and harvest,
 Reaper and gleaner,
 And rough-ruddy faces
 Of lowly labour,
 Slided The Gleam—

6

Then, with a melody
 Stronger and statelier,
 Led me at length
 To the city and palace
 Of Arthur the king;
 Touch'd at the golden
 Cross of the churches,
 Flash'd on the Tournament,
 Flicker'd and bicker'd
 From helmet to helmet,
 And last on the forehead
 Of Arthur the blameless
 Rested The Gleam.

7

Clouds and darkness
 Closed upon Camelot;
 Arthur had vanish'd
 I knew not whither,
 The king who loved me,
 And cannot die;
 For out of the darkness
 Silent and slowly
 The Gleam, that had waned to a wintry glimmer
 On icy fallow
 And faded forest,
 Drew to the valley
 Named of the shadow,
 And slowly brightening
 Out of the glimmer,
 And slowly moving again to a melody
 Yearningly tender,

Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with The Gleam.

8

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came——
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers The Gleam.

9

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

JUNE BRACKEN AND HEATHER¹

TO E.T.

There on the top of the down,
The wild heather round me and over me June's high blue,
When I look'd at the bracken so bright and the heather so
brown,
I thought to myself I would offer this book to you,
This, and my love together,
To you that are seventy-seven,
With a faith as clear as the heights of the June-blue heaven,
And a fancy as summer-new
As the green of the bracken amid the gloom of the heather.

1892

DE PROFUNDIS:

THE TWO GREETINGS

TO H.T.

AUGUST 11, 1852

This poem was begun after the birth of the poet's eldest son in 1852, and finished and published in 1880. The main poem is in two parts. In the first, life is viewed, as we know it through science, as a material phenomenon. Forces in time and space, as nearly infinite as we can conceive, have been leading up to this one birth with the short life of a man before it. The poet prays that this life may be noble and happy. In the second part, the poet leaves the world of appearances and conceives the child as coming from the other deep, the world of the spirit; a moral being with the awful power of making or marring his own destiny and that of others. The wonders of the material universe are still recognized, but they fade into insignificance beside the great facts of the human personality and free will.

The Human Cry is a prayer of self-prostration before the Infinite, added on the suggestion of Jowett.

I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Where all that was to be, in all that was,
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy light—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Thro' all this changing world of changeless law,
And every phase of ever-heightening life,
And nine long months of antenatal gloom,

¹The poems which follow are all on religious or philosophic themes. I have prefaced them with these lines in which Tennyson dedicated to his wife his posthumous volume *The Death of Ænone and other poems*.

With this last moon, this crescent—her dark orb
 Touch'd with earth's light—thou comest, darling boy;
 Our own; a babe in lineament and limb
 Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man;
 Whose face and form are hers and mine in one,
 Indissolubly married like our love;
 Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve
 This mortal race thy kin so well, that men
 May bless thee as we bless thee, O young life
 Breaking with laughter from the dark; and may
 The fated channel where thy motion lives
 Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy course
 Along the years of haste and random youth
 Unshatter'd; then full-current thro' full man:
 And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,
 By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,
 To that last deep where we and thou are still.

II

I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
 From that great deep, before our world begins,
 Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will—
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
 From that true world within the world we see,
 Whereof our world is but the bounding shore—
 Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,
 With this ninth moon, that sends the hidden sun
 Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy.

2

For in the world, which is not ours, They said
 'Let us make man' and that which should be man,
 From that one light no man can look upon,
 Drew to this shore lit by the suns and moons
 And all the shadows. O dear Spirit half-lost
 In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign
 That thou art thou—who wailest being born
 And banish'd into mystery, and the pain
 Of this divisible-indivisible world
 Among the numerable-innumerable
 Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite space
 In finite-infinite Time—our mortal veil

And shatter'd phantom of that infinite One,
 Who made thee unconceivably Thyself
 Out of His whole World-self and all in all—
 Live thou! and of the grain and husk, the grape
 And ivyberry, choose; and still depart
 From death to death thro' life and life, and find
 Nearer and ever nearer Him, who wrought
 Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,
 But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,
 With power on thine own act and on the world.

THE HUMAN CRY

I

Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!—
 Infinite Ideality!
 Immeasurable Reality!
 Infinite Personality!
 Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

2

We feel we are nothing—for all is Thou and in Thee;
 We feel we are something—*that* also has come from Thee;
 We know we are nothing—but Thou wilt help us to be.
 Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

1880

WAGES

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
 Paid with a voice, flying by to be lost on an endless sea—
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—
 Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she:
 Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,
 Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and
 the fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seat of the just,
 To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:
 Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

1868

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?¹

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but that which has power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can
meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;²

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

1869

THE VOICE AND THE PEAK³

I

The voice and the Peak
Far over summit and lawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn!

¹This line means our vision of God, not His vision of the world.

²When a stick is held in the water it often seems to bend sharply at the point where it touches the surface.

³Written by Tennyson during a visit to the Val d'Anzasca which he thought the most beautiful in Switzerland.

2

All night have I heard the voice
Rave over the rocky bar,
But thou wert silent in heaven,
Above thee glided the star.

3

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
That standest high above all?
'I am the voice of the Peak,
I roar and rave for I fall.

4

'A thousand voices go
To North, South, East, and West;
They leave the heights and are troubled,
And moan and sink to their rest.

5

'The fields are fair beside them,
The chestnut towers in his bloom;
But they—they feel the desire of the deep—
Fall, and follow their doom.

6

'The deep has power on the height,
And the height has power on the deep;
They are raised for ever and ever,
And sink again into sleep.'¹

7

Not raised for ever and ever,
But when their cycle is o'er,
The valley, the voice, the peak, the star
Pass, and are found no more.

8

The Peak is high and flush'd
At his highest with sunrise fire;
The Peak is high, and the stars are high,
And the thought of a man is higher.

¹The waters are continually drawn down from the glacier by the force of gravity, drawn upwards into the higher atmosphere by evaporation and precipitated downward again as rain.

9

A deep below the deep,
And a height beyond the height!
Our hearing is not hearing,
And our seeing is not sight.¹

10

The voice and the Peak
Far into heaven withdrawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn!

1879

VASTNESS

1

Many a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after many a vanish'd
face,
Many a planet by many a sun may roll with the dust of a vanish'd
race.

2

Raving politics, never at rest—as this poor earth's pale history
runs,—
What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million
million of suns?

3

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side, truthless violence
mourn'd by the Wise,
Thousands of voices drowning his own in a popular torrent of
lies upon lies;

4

Stately purposes, valour in battle, glorious annals of army and
fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the wrong cause, trumpets
of victory, groans of defeat;

5

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk, and Charity setting
the martyr aflame;
Thralldom who walks with the banner of Freedom, and recks
not to ruin a realm in her name.

¹Stanzas 7, 8, and 9 may be paraphrased as follows: the material universe is impermanent; man's physical senses cannot perceive anything beyond it but his power of thought is spiritual and can transcend.

6

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the gloom of doubts that
darken the schools;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand, follow'd up by her
vassal legion of fools;

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her spice and her
vintage, her silk and her corn;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbours, famishing populace,
wharves forlorn;

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise; gloom of the evening,
Life at a close;
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide downway with her flying robe
and her poison'd rose;

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of Pleasure, a worm which
writhes all day, and at night
Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and stings him back
to the curse of the light;

10

Wealth with his wines and his wedded harlots; honest Poverty,
bare to the bone;
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty; Flattery gilding the rift in a
throne;

11

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a jubilant challenge
to Time and to Fate;
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on all the laurel'd graves
of the Great:

12

Love for the maiden, crown'd with marriage, no regrets for
aught that has been,
Household happiness, gracious children, debtless competence,
golden mean;

13

National hatreds of whole generations, and pigmy spites of the
village spire;
Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle, and vows that are
snapt in a moment of fire;

14

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and died in the
doing it, flesh without mind;
He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till Self died out in the
love of his kind;

15

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter, and all these old
revolutions of earth;
All new-old revolutions of Empire—change of the tide—what is
all of it worth?

16

What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying voices of
prayer?
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy with all
that is fair?

17

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own corpse-
coffins at last,
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd in the deeps of
a meaningless Past?

18

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a moment's anger
of bees in their hive?—

• • • •

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love him for ever: the dead
are not dead but alive.¹

1885

THE ANCIENT SAGE²

A thousand summers ere the time of Christ
From out his ancient city came a Seer
Whom one that loved, and honour'd him, and yet
Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but worn

¹The reference is to Arthur Hallam.

²Written after reading a book on the life and maxims of the Chinese philosopher Lao-tse and representing what Tennyson felt he might have believed had he lived like Lao-tse—"a thousand summers ere the time of Christ".

From wasteful living, follow'd—in his hand
A scroll of verse—till that old man before
A cavern whence an affluent fountain pour'd
From darkness into daylight, turn'd and spoke.

This wealth of waters might but seem to draw
From yon dark cave, but, son, the source is higher,
Yon summit half-a-league in air—and higher,
The cloud that hides it—higher still, the heavens
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and whereout
The cloud descended. Force is from the heights.
I am wearied of our city, son, and go
To spend my one last year among the hills.
What hast thou there? Some deathsong for the Ghouls
'To make their banquet relish? let me read.

“How far thro' all the bloom and brake
That nightingale is heard!
What power but the bird's could make
This music in the bird?
How summer-bright are yonder skies,
And earth as fair in hue!
And yet what sign of aught that lies
Behind the green and blue?
But man to-day is fancy's fool
As man hath ever been.
The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule
Were never heard or seen.”

If thou would'st hear the Nameless, and wilt dive
Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,
'There, brooding by the central altar, thou
May'st haply learn the Nameless hath a voice,
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,
As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not know;
For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake
'That sees and stirs the surface-shadow there
But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,
The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath, within
The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,
And in the million-millionth of a grain
Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,
To me, my son, more mystic than myself,
Or even than the Nameless is to me.

And when thou sendest thy free soul thro' heaven,
Nor understandest bound nor boundlessness,

Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred names.
And if the Nameless should withdraw from all
Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world
Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

“And since—from when this earth began—
The Nameless never came
Among us, never spake with man,
And never named the Name”—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one:
Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay my son,
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,
Am not thyself in converse with thyself,
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!
She reels not in the storm of warring words,
She brightens at the clash of ‘Yes’ and ‘No,’
She sees the Best that glimmers thro’ the Worst,
She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,
She spies the summer thro’ the winter bud,
She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
She hears the lark within the songless egg,
She finds the fountain where they wail’d ‘Mirage’!

“What Power? aught akin to Mind,
The mind in me and you?
Or power as of the Gods gone blind.
Who see not what they do?”

But some in yonder city hold, my son,
That none but Gods could build this house of ours,
So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
All work of man, yet like all work of man,
A beauty with defect—till That which knows,
And is not known, but felt thro’ what we feel
Within ourselves is highest, shall descend
On this half-deed, and shape it at the last
According to the Highest in the Highest.

"What Power but the Years that make
 And break the vase of clay,
 And stir the sleeping earth, and wake
 The bloom that fades away?
 What rulers but the Days and Hours
 That cancel weal with woe,
 And wind the front of youth with flowers,
 And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing by,
 And seem to flicker past thro' sun and shade,
 Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or Pain;
 But with the Nameless is nor Day nor Hour;
 Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought,
 Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the Eternal Now:
 This double seeming of the single world!—
 My words are like the babblings in a dream
 Of nightmare, when the babblings break the dream.
 But thou be wise in this dream-world of ours,
 Nor take thy dial for thy deity,
 But make the passing shadow serve thy will.

"The years that made the stripling wise
 Undo their work again,
 And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,
 The last and least of men;
 Who clings to earth, and once would dare
 Hell-heat or Arctic cold,
 And now one breath of cooler air
 Would loose him from his hold;
 His winter chills him to the root,
 He withers marrow and mind;
 The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit
 Is jutting thro' the rind;
 The tiger spasms tear his chest,
 The palsy wags his head;
 The wife, the sons, who love him best
 Would fain that he were dead;
 The griefs by which he once was wrung
 Were never worth the while"—

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow life
 Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung
 But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the past
Is feebler than his knees;
The passive sailor wrecks at last
In ever-silent seas;
The warrior hath forgot his arms,
The Learned all his lore;
The changing market frets or charms
The merchant's hope no more;
The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,
And now is lost in cloud;
The plowman passes, bent with pain,
To mix with what he plow'd;
The poet whom his Age would quote
As heir of endless fame—
He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,
Not even his own name.
For man has overlived his day,
And, darkening in the light,
Scarce feels the senses break away
To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird can fly.

"The years that when my Youth began
Had set the lily and rose
By all my ways where'er they ran,
Have ended mortal foes;
My rose of love for ever gone,
My lily of truth and trust—
They made her lily and rose in one,
And changed her into dust.
O rosetree planted in my grief,
And growing, on her tomb,
Her dust is greening in your leaf,
Her blood is in your bloom.
O slender lily waving there,
And laughing back the light,
In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'
When all is dark as night."

My son, the world is dark with griefs and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the Heavens.
Who knows but that the darkness is in man?
The doors of Night may be the gates of Light;
For wert thou born or blind or deaf, and then

Suddenly heal'd, how would'st thou glory in all
 The splendours and the voices of the world!
 And we, the poor earth's dying race, and yet
 No phantoms, watching from a phantom shore,
 Await the last and largest sense to make
 The phantom walls of this illusion fade,
 And show us that the world is wholly fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years
 As laughter over wine,
 And vain the laughter as the tears,
 O brother, mine or thine,

For all that laugh, and all that weep
 And all that breathe are one
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep
 That moves, and all is gone."

But that one ripple on the boundless deep
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and itself
 For ever changing form, but evermore
 One with the boundless motion of the deep.

"Yet wine and laughter friends! and set
 The lamps alight, and call
 For golden music, and forget
 The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my son—
 But earth's dark forehead flings athwart the heavens
 Her shadow crown'd with stars—and yonder—out
 To northward—some that never set, but pass
 From sight and night to lose themselves in day.
 I hate the black negation of the bier,
 And wish the dead, as happier than ourselves
 And higher, having climb'd one step beyond
 Our village miseries, might be borne in white
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from hence
 With songs in praise of death, and crown'd with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of to-day
 Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent Word
 Of that world-prophet in the heart of man.

"Tho' some have gleams or so they say
Of more than mortal things."

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft
On me, when boy, there came what then I call'd,
Who knew no books and no philosophies,
In my boy-phrase 'The Passion of the Past.'
'The first gray streak of earliest summer-dawn,
'The last long stripe of waning crimson gloom,
As if the late and early were but one—
A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower
Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost and gone!'
A breath, a whisper—some divine farewell—
Desolate sweetness—far and far away—
What had he loved, what had he lost, the boy?
I know not and I speak of what has been.
And more, my son! for more than once when I
Sat all alone, revolving in myself
The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was locsed,
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.

"And idle gleams will come and go,
But still the clouds remain;"

The clouds themselves are children of the Sun.

"And Night and Shadow rule below
When only Day should reign."

And Day and Night are children of the Sun,
And idle gleams to thee are light to me.
Some say, the Light was father of the Night,
And some, the Night was father of the Light,
No night no day!—I touch thy world again—
No ill no good! such counter-terms, my son,
Are border-races, holding each its own
By endless war: but night enough is there
In yon dark city: get thee back: and since
The key to that weird casket, which for thee
But holds a skull, is neither thine nor mine,

But in the hand of what is more than man,
 Or in man's hand when man is more than man,
 Let be thy wail and help thy fellow men,
 And make thy gold thy vassal not thy king,
 And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,
 And send the day into the darken'd heart;
 Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,
 A dying echo from a falling wall;
 Nor care—for Hunger hath the Evil eye—
 To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold
 Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous looms;
 Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,
 Nor drown thyself with flies in honied wine;
 Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,
 And lose thy life by usage of thy sting;
 Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,
 Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wantonness;
 And more—think well! Do-well will follow thought,
 And in the fatal sequence of this world
 An evil thought may soil thy children's blood;
 But curb the beast would cast thee in the mire,
 And leave the hot swamp of voluptuousness
 A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,
 And lay thine uphill shoulder to the wheel,
 And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence, if thou
 Look higher, then—perchance—thou mayest—beyond
 A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
 And past the range of Night and Shadow—see
 The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day
 Strike on the Mount of Vision!

So, farewell.

1885

PARNASSUS

Exegi monumentum . . .

Quod non . . .

Possit diruere . . .

. . . innumerabilis

Annorum series et fuga temporum.—HORACE.

I

What be those crown'd forms high over the sacred fountain?
 Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised to the heights of the
 mountain,
 And over the flight of the Ages! O Goddesses, help me up
 thither!
 Lightning may shrivel the laurel of Caesar, but mine would not
 wither.

Steep is the mountain, but you, you will help me to overcome it,
And stand with my head in the zenith, and roll my voice from
the summit,
Sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth and her listening
nations,
And mixt with the great Sphere-music of stars and of con-
stellations.

2

What be those two shapes high over the sacred fountain,
Taller than all the Muses, and huger than all the mountain?
On those two known peaks they stand ever spreading and
heightening;
Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by more than lightning!
Look, in their deep double shadow the crown'd ones all dis-
appearing!
Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope for a deathless hearing!
'Sounding for ever and ever?' pass on! the sight confuses—
These are Astronomy and Geology, terrible Muses!¹

3

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off a pure Pierian altar,
Tho' their music here be mortal need the singer greatly care?
Other songs for other worlds! the fire within him would not
falter!
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here is Homer there.

1889

HYMN TO THE SUN

I

Once again thou flamest heavenward, once again we see thee rise.
Every morning is thy birthday gladdening human hearts and
eyes.

Every morning here we greet it, bowing lowly down before
thee,
Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in thine ever-changing
skies.

¹*Astronomy* shows the insignificance of the earth in relation to the universe and of mankind as inhabitants of the earth. *Geology* suggests that ultimately the earth and all life upon it will cease to exist. In the light of this, human fame is negligible, but the sacred fire of the poetic spirit is immortal and will find its own realization in Eternity.

2

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light from clime to
clime,
Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in their woodland
rhyme.
Warble bird, and open flower, and, men, below the dome
of azure
Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame that measures
Time!

1832

KAPIOLANI

This was one of Tennyson's last poems. The metre probably follows the rhythm of the Hawaiian songs sung by the servants of Emma, Queen of the Sandwich Islands, when she visited Tennyson at Farringford in 1865. Kapiolani was a great chieftainess who lived in the Sandwich Islands at the beginning of the nineteenth century. She won the cause of Christianity by openly defying the priests of the terrible goddess Peelè. In spite of their threats of vengeance she ascended the volcano Mauna-Loa, then clambered down over a bank of cinders 400 feet high to the great lake of fire (nine miles round)—Kilaueä—the home and haunt of the goddess, and flung into the boiling lava the consecrated berries which it was sacrilege for a woman to handle.

1

When from the terrors of Nature a people have fashion'd and
worship a Spirit of Evil,
Blest be the Voice of the Teacher who calls to them
'Set yourselves free!'

2

Noble the Saxon who hurl'd at his Idol a valorous weapon in
olden England!
Great and greater, and greatest of women, island heroine,
Kapiolani
Clomb the mountain, and flung the berries, and dared the
Goddess, and freed the people
Of Hawa-i-eel!

A people believing that Peelè the Goddess would wallow in
fiery riot and revel
On Kilaueä,
Dance in a fountain of flame with her devils, or shake with her
thunders and shatter her island,
Rolling her anger
Thro' blasted valley and flaring forest in blood-red cataracts
down to the sea!

4

Long as the lava-light
Glares from the lava-lake
Dazing the starlight,
Long as the silvery vapour in daylight
Over the mountain
Floats, will the glory of Kapiolani be mingled with either on
Hawa-i-ee.

5

What said her Priesthood?
'Woe to this island if ever a woman should handle or gather the
berries of Peelè!
Accurséd were she!
And woe to this island if ever a woman should climb to the
dwelling of Peelè the Goddess!
Accurséd were she!'

6

One from the Sunrise
Dawn'd on His people, and slowly before him
Vanish'd shadow-like
Gods and Goddesses,
None but the terrible Peelè remaining as Kapiolani ascended her
mountain,
Baffled her priesthood,
Broke the Taboo,
Dipt to the crater,
Call'd on the Power adored by the Christian, and crying 'I dare
her, let Peelè avenge herself!'
Into the flame-billow dash'd the berries, and drove the demon
from Hawa-i-ee.

1892

DOUBT AND PRAYER

Tho' Sin too oft, when smitten by Thy rod,
Rail at 'Blind Fate' with many a vain 'Alas!'
From sin thro' sorrow into Thee we pass
By that same path our true forefathers trod;
And let not Reason fail me, nor the sod
Draw from my death Thy living flower and grass,
Before I learn that Love, which is, and was
My Father, and my Brother, and my God!

Steel me with patience! soften me with grief!
 Let blow the trumpet strongly while I pray,
 Till this embattled wall of unbelief
 My prison, not my fortress, fall away!
 Then, if Thou wilt, let my day be brief,
 So Thou wilt strike Thy glory thro' the day.

*an early sonnet
 first published in 1892*

FAITH

I

Doubt no longer that the Highest is the wisest and the best,
 Let not all that saddens Nature blight thy hope or break thy rest,
 Quail not at the fiery mountain, at the shipwreck, or the rolling
 Thunder, or the rending earthquake, or the famine, or the pest!

2

Neither mourn if human creeds be lower than the heart's desire!
 Thro' the gates that bar the distance comes a gleam of what is
 higher.

Wait till Death has flung them open, when the man will make
 the Maker

Dark no more with human hatreds in the glare of deathless fire!

1892

THE SILENT VOICES

When the dumb Hour, clothed in black,
 Brings the Dreams about my bed,
 Call me not so often back,
 Silent Voices of the dead,
 Toward the lowland ways behind me,
 And the sunlight that is gone!
 Call me rather, silent voices,
 Forward to the starry track
 Glimmering up the heights beyond me,
 On, and always on!

1892

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

1

Will my tiny spark of being wholly vanish in your deeps and heights?
Must my day be dark by reason, O ye Heavens, of your boundless nights,
Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and your fiery clash of metcorites?

2

'Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the limit of thy human state,
Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent Opener of the Gate.'

1892

THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE¹

To the Mourners

The bridal garland falls upon the bier,
The shadow of a crown, that o'er him hung,
Has vanish'd in the shadow cast by Death.
So princely, tender, truthful, reverent, pure—
Mourn! That a world-wide Empire mourns with you,
That all the Thrones are clouded by your loss,
Were slender solace. Yet be comforted;
For if this earth be ruled by Perfect Love,
Then, after this brief range of blameless days,
The toll of funeral in an Angel ear
Sounds happier than the merriest marriage-bell.
The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life,
His shadow darkens earth: his truer name
Is 'Onward,' no discordance in the roll
And march of that Eternal Harmony
Whereto the worlds beat time, tho' faintly heard
Until the great Hereafter. Mourn in hope!

1892

¹The Duke was the eldest son of the Prince of Wales. He died on Jan. 14, 1892, a few days before the date fixed for his marriage. (See Introduction, page 51.)

CROSSING THE BAR¹

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face²
When I have crost the bar.

1889

¹Tennyson asked that this poem should always be printed at the end of his works. See Introduction, page 50.

²The pilot has been on board ever since the ship started and has guided her out of harbour and over the bar, but the passengers do not know this until the dangerous part of the voyage is over and they see him come up on deck.

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